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BY JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

I. AN APPEAL TO THE SERIOUS AND CANDID PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY,

ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS, VIZ.

1. THE USE OF REASON IN MATTERS OF RELIGION,
2. THE POWER OF MAN TO DO THE WILL OF GOD,
3. ORIGINAL SIN,
4. ELECTION AND REPROBATION,
5. THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST; AND,
6. ATONEMENT FOR SIN BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

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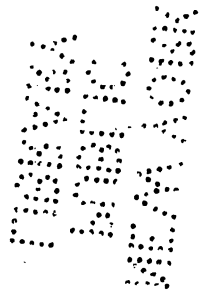

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TO US THERE IS ONE GOD, THE FATHER; AND ONE MEDIATOR, THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. 1 COR. VIII. 6. —1 TIM. II. 5.

AN APPEAL

TO THE

SERIOUS AND CANDID PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY.

MY CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

PERMIT one who profeſſes obedience to the ſame Lord, and faith in the precious promiſes of the ſame goſpel with yourſelves, to addreſs himſelf to you with all freedom and plainneſs of ſpeech, on ſubjects relating to our common ſalvation. I need not tell you that the ſubjects are intereſting. In reality nothing elſe is intereſting, in compariſon with them. For what is this world compared with the future! What is time compared with eternity! Believe me, my brethren, it is nothing but the deepeſt concern for the honour of a religion which is the moſt valuable inheritance of the human race, and which ſets us above all the follies and vices, all the weakneſſes and troubles of life, by giving us the moſt ſolid hope in death, that has induced me to ſolicit your attention. But I am confident that you will not think it ill-beſtowed, becauſe it is upon a ſubject that is near and dear to you, and the conſideration of which cannot but pleaſe and profit you.

If, by the bleſſing of God upon our common endeavours to *lead* and to *be led into all truth*, I ſhall be ſo happy as to bring you to entertain the ſame views of theſe things with myſelf, we ſhall rejoice together; and if, after all that I may be able to advance, you ſhould ſtill think differently from me, I truſt you will, at leaſt, be diſpoſed to think with more candour of ſome of your fellow-chriſtians, who love the goſpel, and are zealous for its honour, though you may think them miſtaken in their conceptions concerning it. Let me intreat you therefore, my brethren, to give me a patient and candid hearing. Attend, in the ſpirit of meekneſs, to what I ſhall ſay from the earneſtneſs of my heart; and exerciſe the reaſon which God has given you upon this occaſion, which is the nobleſt on which it can be exerciſed, and for which you may, therefore, conclude, that it was principally given you.

I. Of the use of reason in matters of religion.

Be not backward, or afraid, my brethren, to make uſe of your reaſon in matters of religion, or where the ſcriptures are concerned. They both of them proceed from the ſame God and Father of us all, who is the giver of every good and every perfect gift. They cannot, therefore, be contrary to one another, but muſt mutually illuſtrate and enforce one another. Beſides, how can we diſtinguiſh one ſcheme of religion

religion from another, ſo as to give the preference to that which is the moſt deſerving of it, but by the help of our reaſon and underſtanding? What would you yourſelves ſay to a mahometan, whom you would perſuade to abandon the impoſture of Mahomet, and embrace chriſtianity, but bid him uſe his reaſon, and judge, by the help of it, of the manifeſt difference between the two religions, and the great ſuperiority of yours to his? Does not God himſelf appeal to the reaſon of man, when he condeſcends to aſk us, *Whether his ways be not equal?* Ezek. xviii. 29. Does not the apoſtle exhort us that, *in underſtanding we be men?* 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Are we not expreſsly commanded to *prove all things, and then hold faſt that which is good?* 1 Theſſ. v. 21. Alſo when we are commanded to *ſearch the ſcriptures*, John v. 39. more muſt be meant than merely *reading* them, or *receiving implicitly*, the interpretations of others. *Searching* muſt imply an earneſt endeavour to find out for ourſelves, and to underſtand the truths contained in the ſcriptures; and what faculty can we employ for this purpoſe, but that which is commonly called *reaſon*, whereby we are capable of thinking, reflecting, comparing, and judging of things?

Diſtruſt, therefore, all thoſe who decry human reaſon, and who require you to abandon it, wherever religion is concerned. When once they have gained this point with you, they can lead you whither they pleaſe, and impoſe upon you every abſurdity which

their ſiniſter views may make it expedient for them that you ſhould embrace. A popiſh prieſt would require nothing more than this, to make you believe the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation, and that a man is infallible; or to perſuade you to commit the moſt flagrant wickedneſs, as a means of *doing God ſervice*. For the firſt of theſe articles they do not fail to urge the words of ſcripture, which expreſsly ſay, concerning the bread that is uſed in the Lord's ſupper, that it *is the body of Chriſt*; Matt. xxvi. 6. and there is no poſſibility of replying to them, but by appealing to reaſon, as the neceſſary and proper judge of the ſenſe of ſcripture. The papiſt, therefore, as might well be expected, is forward, on all occaſions, to vilify human reaſon, and to require men to abandon it; but true proteſtants will not part with it. It is by the help of reaſon, in conjunction with the ſcriptures, that we guard ourſelves againſt the groſs deluſions of the papiſts, who, after relinquiſhing reaſon, have been *made to believe a lie*; and by the diligent and continued uſe of the ſame power, let us endeavour to combat every remaining error, and trace out and reform every corruption of chriſtianity, till we hold the pure *truth as it is in Jeſus*, and *obey it in the love thereof*.

Do not think that, by recommending the uſe of reaſon, I am about to decry the ſcriptures. My appeal ſhall be to both, upon every ſubject on which I addreſs you; and I think you cannot but ſee that the plaineſt and moſt obvious ſenſe of the ſcriptures is in favour of thoſe doctrines which are moſt agreeable to

reaſon.

reaſon. A good man will rejoice to ſee them thus go hand in hand, mutually illuſtrating and enforcing one another.

II. Of the power of man to do the will of God.

One of the ſubjects with reſpect to which I earneſtly wiſh that you would attend to the voice of reaſon and the ſcriptures, and with reſpect to which one miſtake will be followed by many others, and miſtakes of great conſequence, is concerning *the power of man to do the will of God.* It is a favourite opinion with many teachers of religion, that men have *naturally* (or by that conſtitution and frame which God their maker hath given them) no power at all to do any thing that is good, not even to think a good thought, much leſs actually to obey any of the commands of God; ſo that, if men were left to themſelves, they could do nothing but ſin, and muſt be under a neceſſity of aggravating their condemnation, by every thought, word, and action of their lives. But, my brethren, how does this doctrine agree with the ſcriptures, and particularly with the manner in which the Divine Being conſtantly expoſtulates with the ſinful ſons of men; as when he ſays to the jews, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael.* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *Waſh ye, make you clean. Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well, &c. &c. &c.* Iſa. i. 16.

Is it not plain from this, that it depends upon men themſelves, whether they will repent and turn to God

or not? And how can it depend upon themſelves, if they have not, naturally, a ſufficient power to do it? You cannot think that God would command, and expect obedience, when he had not given power to obey; and much leſs that he would urge men to provide for their own ſafety and happineſs, when himſelf had put an effectual bar in the way of it.

Suppoſe that any man's children were ſhut up in a building that was on fire, while he himſelf was without, and had the key; and that, inſtead of opening the door, to favour their eſcape, he ſhould only call out to them to flee out of the place, in order to avoid inſtant deſtruction; and that, as the neceſſary conſequence of this, they ſhould all periſh in the flames before his eyes; what would you think of ſuch a father? You would want words to expreſs your abhorrence of his cruelty; and yet in this very light do many chriſtian divines repreſent the conduct of that God *whoſe tender mercies are over all his works*, and who has ſolemnly declared, *that he hath no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner but rather that he would turn from his way and live.* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. yea, *who would have all men to be ſaved.* 1 Tim. ii. 4.

The conduct of our *merciful God and Father* is certainly far different from this, and more agreeable to reaſon and equity. If he deſigned us to be accountable creatures, and treats us as ſuch, we muſt have *talents* given us, which we may either improve, or miſimprove. If we be the ſubjects of his *moral*

government,

government, we muſt be in a condition either to *obſerve* or to *break* his laws. A power to do the one neceſſarily ſuppoſes a power to do the other; and without this power we ſhould not be the proper ſubjects of religion; as, in that caſe, it would be in vain to propoſe to us either rewards for obedience or puniſhments for diſobedience.

Nor is the ſuppoſition of a power in man to do the will of God any foundation for *pride*. For we muſt ſtill ſay with the apoſtle, *What have we that we have not received? and how then can we glory, as if we had not received it? Every good and every perfect gift comes from God*; and, knowing this, the more we receive of his bounty, the more thankful and the more humble we ſhould be. I ſhall, certainly, be more ſolicitous to exert myſelf in doing the will of God, when I believe that I have a talent to improve, than if I believe that I have no talent intruſted with me at all; ſo that I cannot do even ſo much as the *wicked and ſlothful ſervant, who hid his talent in a napkin*.

Some of thoſe perſons who believe that all mankind are abſolutely incapable of doing good, are ſometimes heard to invite ſinners of all kinds to come to Chriſt, *as they are*, and to ſay, that the viler they are, the more welcome they will be to him; as if he was, after this, to cleanſe them by ſome miraculous power. But, my brethren, the invitation of the goſpel runs in very different terms. It is, *Repent and bring forth fruits meet*

meet for repentance. Matt. iii. 8. *Repent and be converted that your ſins may be blotted out.* Acts iii. 19. And none are invited *to come to Chriſt*, but thoſe who *labour and are heavy-laden*; nor can they *find reſt for their ſouls*, 'till they have *actually learned of him to be meek and lowly in heart.* Matt. xi. 28.

What can be more contrary to the maxims above mentioned, than the whole tenor of that ſerious expoſtulation with the children of Iſrael in the prophet Iſaiah, part of which I quoted above? *Waſh you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow. Come now* (and not before) *and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord. Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.* Iſa. i. 16, &c.

Others, who entertain the ſame opinion of the utter inability of man to do the will of God, act more conſiſtently with thoſe ſentiments, but far more inconſiſtently with the ſcriptures, in never preaching to ſinners at all; though to *call ſinners to repentance* was the chief end of Chriſt's coming into the world. *Matt.* ix. 13.

Whatever repreſents a ſtate of acceptance with God, as a thing that may be brought about without any efforts of our own, and eſpecially if it may be done in a moment, or in a very ſhort ſpace of time, is ſure to be a popular doctrine. Mankind in general

care

care not how little is expected of them, or how little they themſelves have to do, in order to get to heaven. But true religion, that alone which affords ſolid ground of hope towards God, conſiſts in a change of heart, affections, and habits; which can only be brought about by ſerious reſolution, and a vigorous and conſtant exertion of our powers. Nay, unleſs a courſe of virtue be begun, and good habits formed early in life, there is very great danger that the *thorns*, *briers*, or *bad ſoil*, will prevent the good ſeed from ever coming to maturity.

To believe, as the ſame perſons do, that faith and repentance are nothing that we ourſelves are capable of, but altogether the miraculous operation of the Spirit of God in us and upon us, ſuppoſes that this great and ſudden change may as well take place at the *laſt* hour of life, as at any other: which certainly encourages the moſt unwarrantable and moſt dangerous preſumption, and is far from having any countenance in the ſcriptures. The word of God always repreſents a ſafe and *happy death* as the conſequence of nothing but a good and *well-ſpent life*. Some, indeed, are ſaid to have been called at the *eleventh* hour, but none at the *twelfth*, when the time for labouring in the vineyard was quite over; and not one of the fooliſh virgins, who had neglected to provide themſelves with oil, was admitted to the marriage-ſupper.

III. Of original sin.

As a foundation for this ſtrange doctrine, of the utter inability of men to do what God requires of them, a doctrine ſo injurious both to our maker and ourſelves, it is ſaid that by his firſt offence our firſt parent Adam, and all his poſterity, loſt all power of doing any thing acceptable to God for the future; that he was the repreſentative of all his poſterity, ſo that when he ſinned, we all ſinned; and every ſin being an offence againſt an infinite God, we all became, from that moment, liable to an infinite puniſhment, even the everlaſting wrath and curſe of our maker. And they ſay, that, on this account only, it would have been juſt in God to have made us all ſuffer the moſt exquiſite and endleſs torments in hell, even though we had never ſinned in our own perſons.

But, my brethren, you find nothing like any part of this in your bibles. For there you read, *the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die.* Ezek. xviii. 4. And long after the tranſgreſſion of Adam, and to this very day, God is continually calling upon men to *ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well*; which certainly ſuppoſes that men always have had, and that we now have, a power to do ſo. It is allowed that we *ſuffer* by the ſin of Adam, as any child may ſuffer in conſequence of the wickedneſs of his anceſtor; but it is not poſſible that we ſhould have *ſinned* in him. Wherever there is *ſin*, there is *guilt*; that is, ſomething that may be the foundation

foundation of *remorſe* of conſcience; ſomething that a man may be *ſorry for*, and *repent of*; ſomething that he may wiſh he had not done; all which clearly implies, that ſin is ſomething that a man has given his *conſent* to, and therefore muſt be convinced of the reaſonableneſs of his being puniſhed for. But how can any man repent of the ſin of Adam, or feel any thing like remorſe of conſcience for it; when he cannot but know that he never gave his conſent to it, and could not poſſibly have been, in the leaſt degree, acceſſary to it? Good and bad conduct are, in their own nature, perſonal, and cannot poſſibly be transferred from one to another. Whatever ſome divines pretend, nothing of this kind can be *imputed* in this ſenſe of the word. We may receive harm by means of one perſon, and benefit by means of another; but no ſin of the former, or righteouſneſs of the latter, can be conſidered as ours, in the eye of an equitable and juſt God. The contrary is as much the language and the plain meaning of the ſcriptures throughout, as it is agreeable to the common ſenſe and reaſon that God has given us.

IV. Of Election and Reprobation.

Supposing that all mankind became liable to the everlaſting wrath and curſe of God for the ſin of one man, ſome divines ſay, that it was mercy in God to ſave any, though by an *arbitrary decree*, which left all the reſt of the human race under an inevitable neceſſity

neceſſity of periſhing. But certainly, my brethren, ſuch *tender mercy is cruelty*. All the creatures of God muſt look up to him as the author of their being, ſince it was, undoubtedly, in his power to give, or to withhold it, at his pleaſure; and, ſurely, a good and merciful God would have put a ſtop to the propagation of ſuch a race of creatures, rather than ſuffer them to be born in ſuch ſhocking circumſtances; in which he infallibly foreſaw, that the greateſt part of them muſt be expoſed to, and even actually ſuffer remedileſs deſtruction. As ſurely as I derive my being from a juſt and merciful God, I conclude that the terms on which I came into the world are advantageous to me; and therefore, that it muſt be my own fault only, if I have not reaſon to rejoice in it, and to be thankful for it. But, indeed, I can hardly think that any man ſeriouſly believes, that the greateſt part of his fellow-creatures are born into the world under a predetermined neceſſity of being for ever miſerable. For, in that caſe, it muſt appear probable, that any children which he himſelf may be the means of bringing into the world will be for ever miſerable; and ſurely no man of real goodneſs or compaſſion would wiſh to have children, or be acceſſary to their being born in ſuch circumſtances.

If this doctrine be true, what motive can any man have to endeavour to *flee from the wrath to come*; Matt. iii. 7. when, if it is to be his lot at all, nothing that he can do will enable him to eſcape it; or what

what motive can a man have to exert himſelf to *lay hold on eternal life*; 1 Tim. vi. 12. when, if he is to enjoy it at all, he cannot poſſibly miſs of it, or of any thing belonging to it, or that is neceſſary to prepare him for it? What reaſon had the apoſtle Paul to exhort chriſtians to *take heed leſt they ſhould fall*, 1. Cor. x. 12. when none that ever did ſtand could poſſibly fall? and what reaſon had he to *labour, leſt after having preached to others, he himſelf ſhould be a caſt-away*, 1. Cor. ix. 27. when being certain of his converſion, he muſt have known that that conſequence was impoſſible?

This doctrine, of abſolute election and reprobation, is certainly a doctrine of *licentiouſneſs*, and not a *doctrine according to godlineſs*; and let divines employ all the ingenuity they are maſters of, it is impoſſible for them to clear this opinion from being the cauſe of fatal deſpair in ſome, and as fatal a ſecurity in others. If this opinion were true, and men were really aware of their ſituation, I ſhould think it impoſſible to prevent their falling into abſolute diſtraction, through terror and anxiety. It would be like a man having his *all*, his *life*, nay infinitely more than his life, depending upon the caſt of a die; the decree of God being a thing that he has as little power to command. Beſides, this doctrine certainly repreſents the God and Father of us all in ſuch a light, as no man would chuſe that he himſelf ſhould appear in.

V. Of the divinity of Christ.

So fatal have the conſequences of the ſin of Adam been repreſented, that you have been told that nothing but the blood of God himſelf could reverſe them; and therefore you have been taught to believe, that Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe proper title is *the ſon of man*, as well as *the ſon of God*, was not merely *man*, but very and eternal *God* himſelf; without conſidering that, by thus making more Gods than one, you are guilty of a breach of the firſt and moſt important of all the commandments, which ſays expreſsly, *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before me.* Exod. xx. 3. But whatever ſuch divines may ſay, the apoſtle Paul ſays, in direct contradiction to them, that *to us there is but one God, the* FATHER, *of whom are all things; and one Lord, Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him,* 1 Cor. viii. 6. And again, after ſaying that we have *one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm*, he adds, *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Eph. iv. 5. 6. The creed of all chriſtians, therefore, ought to be, *There is* ONE GOD, *and one mediator between God and men, the* MAN *Chriſt Jeſus.* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

The *Father* is frequently ſtiled *God*, even with reſpect to Chriſt, as well as other beings. *The God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, give unto you, that ye may know the exceeding greatneſs of his power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand, &c.* Eph. i. 17, &c.

17, &c. Chriſt himſelf uſes the ſame language, *I aſcend unto my Father, and your Father, and unto my God, and your God.* John xx. 17. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Matt. xxvii. 26.

Chriſt who was *the image of the inviſible God*, and the *firſt-born* (or *moſt excellent*) *of all his creatures*, Col. i. 15. and *in whom dwelt all the fulneſs of the godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9, acknowledged that *his Father was greater than he.* John xiv. 28. and indeed, upon all occaſions, and in the cleareſt terms, he expreſſed his dependence upon God his father, for all his power and glory; as if he had purpoſely intended to guard his diſciples againſt forming too high an opinion of the dignity of their maſter. *Verily I ſay unto you, the Son can do nothing of himſelf.* John v. 19. *I can of mine own ſelf do nothing. As I hear I judge, and my judgment is juſt, becauſe I ſeek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who ſent me.* v. 30. *The words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of myſelf, and the Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.* xiv. 10. *I live by the Father.* vi. 57. *The Father hath given to the ſon to have life in himſelf; and hath given him authority to execute judgment.* v. 26, 27. *All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.* Matt. xxviii. 18. He even calls his Father *the only true God.* John xvii. 3. *that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* It appears to me not to be in the power of language to exclude the idea of the

or not? And how can it depend upon themſelves, if they have not, naturally, a ſufficient power to do it? You cannot think that God would command, and expect obedience, when he had not given power to obey; and much leſs that he would urge men to provide for their own ſafety and happineſs, when himſelf had put an effectual bar in the way of it.

Suppoſe that any man's children were ſhut up in a building that was on fire, while he himſelf was without, and had the key; and that, inſtead of opening the door, to favour their eſcape, he ſhould only call out to them to flee out of the place, in order to avoid inſtant deſtruction; and that, as the neceſſary conſequence of this, they ſhould all periſh in the flames before his eyes; what would you think of ſuch a father? You would want words to expreſs your abhorrence of his cruelty; and yet in this very light do many chriſtian divines repreſent the conduct of that God *whoſe tender mercies are over all his works*, and who has ſolemnly declared, *that he hath no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner but rather that he would turn from his way and live.* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. yea, *who would have all men to be ſaved.* 1 Tim. ii. 4.

The conduct of our *merciful God and Father* is certainly far different from this, and more agreeable to reaſon and equity. If he deſigned us to be accountable creatures, and treats us as ſuch, we muſt have *talents* given us, which we may either improve, or miſimprove. If we be the ſubjects of his *moral*

government,

government, we muſt be in a condition either to *obſerve* or to *break* his laws. A power to do the one neceſſarily ſuppoſes a power to do the other; and without this power we ſhould not be the proper ſubjects of religion; as, in that caſe, it would be in vain to propoſe to us either rewards for obedience or puniſhments for diſobedience.

Nor is the ſuppoſition of a power in man to do the will of God any foundation for *pride*. For we muſt ſtill ſay with the apoſtle, *What have we that we have not received? and how then can we glory, as if we had not received it? Every good and every perfect gift comes from God*; and, knowing this, the more we receive of his bounty, the more thankful and the more humble we ſhould be. I ſhall, certainly, be more ſolicitous to exert myſelf in doing the will of God, when I believe that I have a talent to improve, than if I believe that I have no talent intruſted with me at all; ſo that I cannot do even ſo much as the *wicked and ſlothful ſervant, who hid his talent in a napkin.*

Some of thoſe perſons who believe that all mankind are abſolutely incapable of doing good, are ſometimes heard to invite ſinners of all kinds to come to Chriſt, *as they are*, and to ſay, that the viler they are, the more welcome they will be to him; as if he was, after this, to cleanſe them by ſome miraculous power. But, my brethren, the invitation of the goſpel runs in very different terms. It is, *Repent and bring forth fruits*

meet

meet for repentance. Matt. iii. 8. *Repent and be converted that your ſins may be blotted out.* Acts iii. 19. And none are invited *to come to Chriſt*, but thoſe who *labour and are heavy-laden*; nor can they *find reſt for their ſouls*, 'till they have *actually learned of him to be meek and lowly in heart.* Matt. xi. 28.

What can be more contrary to the maxims above mentioned, than the whole tenor of that ſerious expoſtulation with the children of Iſrael in the prophet Iſaiah, part of which I quoted above? *Waſh you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow. Come now* (and not before) *and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord. Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool.* Iſa. i. 16, &c.

Others, who entertain the ſame opinion of the utter inability of man to do the will of God, act more conſiſtently with thoſe ſentiments, but far more inconſiſtently with the ſcriptures, in never preaching to ſinners at all; though to *call ſinners to repentance* was the chief end of Chriſt's coming into the world. *Matt.* ix. 13.

Whatever repreſents a ſtate of acceptance with God, as a thing that may be brought about without any efforts of our own, and eſpecially if it may be done in a moment, or in a very ſhort ſpace of time, is ſure to be a popular doctrine. Mankind in general

care

care not how little is expected of them, or how little they themſelves have to do, in order to get to heaven. But true religion, that alone which affords ſolid ground of hope towards God, conſiſts in a change of heart, affections, and habits; which can only be brought about by ſerious reſolution, and a vigorous and conſtant exertion of our powers. Nay, unleſs a courſe of virtue be begun, and good habits formed early in life, there is very great danger that the *thorns*, *briers*, or *bad ſoil*, will prevent the good ſeed from ever coming to maturity.

To believe, as the ſame perſons do, that faith and repentance are nothing that we ourſelves are capable of, but altogether the miraculous operation of the Spirit of God in us and upon us, ſuppoſes that this great and ſudden change may as well take place at the *laſt* hour of life, as at any other: which certainly encourages the moſt unwarrantable and moſt dangerous preſumption, and is far from having any countenance in the ſcriptures. The word of God always repreſents a ſafe and *happy death* as the conſequence of nothing but a good and *well-ſpent life*. Some, indeed, are ſaid to have been called at the *eleventh* hour, but none at the *twelfth*, when the time for labouring in the vineyard was quite over; and not one of the fooliſh virgins, who had neglected to provide themſelves with oil, was admitted to the marriage-ſupper.

III. Of original sin.

As a foundation for this ſtrange doctrine, of the utter inability of men to do what God requires of them, a doctrine ſo injurious both to our maker and ourſelves, it is ſaid that by his firſt offence our firſt parent Adam, and all his poſterity, loſt all power of doing any thing acceptable to God for the future; that he was the repreſentative of all his poſterity, ſo that when he ſinned, we all ſinned; and every ſin being an offence againſt an infinite God, we all became, from that moment, liable to an infinite puniſhment, even the everlaſting wrath and curſe of our maker. And they ſay, that, on this account only, it would have been juſt in God to have made us all ſuffer the moſt exquiſite and endleſs torments in hell, even though we had never ſinned in our own perſons.

But, my brethren, you find nothing like any part of this in your bibles. For there you read, *the ſoul that ſinneth, it ſhall die.* Ezek. xviii. 4. And long after the tranſgreſſion of Adam, and to this very day, God is continually calling upon men to *ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do well*; which certainly ſuppoſes that men always have had, and that we now have, a power to do ſo. It is allowed that we *ſuffer* by the ſin of Adam, as any child may ſuffer in conſequence of the wickedneſs of his anceſtor; but it is not poſſible that we ſhould have *ſinned* in him. Wherever there is *ſin*, there is *guilt*; that is, ſomething that may be the foundation

foundation of *remorſe* of conſcience; ſomething that a man may be *ſorry for*, and *repent of*; ſomething that he may wiſh he had not done; all which clearly implies, that ſin is ſomething that a man has given his *conſent* to, and therefore muſt be convinced of the reaſonableneſs of his being puniſhed for. But how can any man repent of the ſin of Adam, or feel any thing like remorſe of conſcience for it; when he cannot but know that he never gave his conſent to it, and could not poſſibly have been, in the leaſt degree, acceſſary to it? Good and bad conduct are, in their own nature, perſonal, and cannot poſſibly be transferred from one to another. Whatever ſome divines pretend, nothing of this kind can be *imputed* in this ſenſe of the word. We may receive harm by means of one perſon, and benefit by means of another; but no ſin of the former, or righteouſneſs of the latter, can be conſidered as ours, in the eye of an equitable and juſt God. The contrary is as much the language and the plain meaning of the ſcriptures throughout, as it is agreeable to the common ſenſe and reaſon that God has given us.

IV. Of Election and Reprobation.

Supposing that all mankind became liable to the everlaſting wrath and curſe of God for the ſin of one man, ſome divines ſay, that it was mercy in God to ſave any, though by an *arbitrary decree*, which left all the reſt of the human race under an inevitable neceſſity

neceſſity of periſhing. But certainly, my brethren, ſuch *tender mercy is cruelty*. All the creatures of God muſt look up to him as the author of their being, ſince it was, undoubtedly, in his power to give, or to withhold it, at his pleaſure; and, ſurely, a good and merciful God would have put a ſtop to the propagation of ſuch a race of creatures, rather than ſuffer them to be born in ſuch ſhocking circumſtances; in which he infallibly foreſaw, that the greateſt part of them muſt be expoſed to, and even actually ſuffer remedileſs deſtruction. As ſurely as I derive my being from a juſt and merciful God, I conclude that the terms on which I came into the world are advantageous to me; and therefore, that it muſt be my own fault only, if I have not reaſon to rejoice in it, and to be thankful for it. But, indeed, I can hardly think that any man ſeriouſly believes, that the greateſt part of his fellow-creatures are born into the world under a predetermined neceſſity of being for ever miſerable. For, in that caſe, it muſt appear probable, that any children which he himſelf may be the means of bringing into the world will be for ever miſerable; and ſurely no man of real goodneſs or compaſſion would wiſh to have children, or be acceſſary to their being born in ſuch circumſtances.

If this doctrine be true, what motive can any man have to endeavour to *flee from the wrath to come*; Matt. iii. 7. when, if it is to be his lot at all, nothing that he can do will enable him to eſcape it; or what

what motive can a man have to exert himſelf to *lay hold on eternal life*; 1 Tim. vi. 12. when, if he is to enjoy it at all, he cannot poſſibly miſs of it, or of any thing belonging to it, or that is neceſſary to prepare him for it? What reaſon had the apoſtle Paul to exhort chriſtians to *take heed leſt they ſhould fall*, 1. Cor. x. 12. when none that ever did ſtand could poſſibly fall? and what reaſon had he to *labour, leſt after having preached to others, he himſelf ſhould be a caſt-away*, 1. Cor. ix. 27. when being certain of his converſion, he muſt have known that that conſequence was impoſſible?

This doctrine, of abſolute election and reprobation, is certainly a doctrine of *licentiouſneſs*, and not a *doctrine according to godlineſs*; and let divines employ all the ingenuity they are maſters of, it is impoſſible for them to clear this opinion from being the cauſe of fatal deſpair in ſome, and as fatal a ſecurity in others. If this opinion were true, and men were really aware of their ſituation, I ſhould think it impoſſible to prevent their falling into abſolute diſtraction, through terror and anxiety. It would be like a man having his *all*, his *life*, nay infinitely more than his life, depending upon the caſt of a die; the decree of God being a thing that he has as little power to command. Beſides, this doctrine certainly repreſents the God and Father of us all in ſuch a light, as no man would chuſe that he himſelf ſhould appear in.

V. Of the divinity of Christ.

So fatal have the conſequences of the ſin of Adam been repreſented, that you have been told that nothing but the blood of God himſelf could reverſe them; and therefore you have been taught to believe, that Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe proper title is *the ſon of man*, as well as *the ſon of God*, was not merely *man*, but very and eternal *God* himſelf; without conſidering that, by thus making more Gods than one, you are guilty of a breach of the firſt and moſt important of all the commandments, which ſays expreſsly, *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods before me.* Exod. xx. 3. But whatever ſuch divines may ſay, the apoſtle Paul ſays, in direct contradiction to them, that *to us there is but one God, the* Father, *of whom are all things; and one Lord, Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him,* 1 Cor. viii. 6. And again, after ſaying that we have *one Lord, one faith, one baptiſm,* he adds, *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Eph. iv. 5. 6. The creed of all chriſtians, therefore, ought to be, *There is* one God, *and one mediator between God and men, the* man *Chriſt Jeſus.* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

The *Father* is frequently ſtiled *God*, even with reſpect to Chriſt, as well as other beings. *The God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, give unto you, that ye may know the exceeding greatneſs of his power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand, &c.* Eph. i. 17, &c.

17, &c. Chriſt himſelf uſes the ſame language, *I aſcend unto my Father, and your Father, and unto my God, and your God.* John xx. 17. *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Matt. xxvii. 26.

Chriſt who was *the image of the inviſible God,* and the *firſt-born* (or *moſt excellent) of all his creatures,* Col. i. 15. and *in whom dwelt all the fulneſs of the godhead bodily,* Col. ii. 9, acknowledged that *his Father was greater than he.* John xiv. 28. and indeed, upon all occaſions, and in the cleareſt terms, he expreſſed his dependence upon God his father, for all his power and glory; as if he had purpoſely intended to guard his diſciples againſt forming too high an opinion of the dignity of their maſter. *Verily I ſay unto you, the Son can do nothing of himſelf.* John v. 19. *I can of mine own ſelf do nothing. As I hear I judge, and my judgment is juſt, becauſe I ſeek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who ſent me.* v. 30. *The words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not of myſelf, and the Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.* xiv. 10. *I live by the Father.* vi. 57. *The Father hath given to the ſon to have life in himſelf; and hath given him authority to execute judgment.* v. 26, 27. *All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.* Matt. xxviii. 18. He even calls his Father *the only true God.* John xvii. 3. *that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* It appears to me not to be in the power of language to exclude the idea of the

divinity of Chriſt more expreſsly than by theſe ſolemn words.

Notwithſtanding the divine communications with which our Lord was favoured, ſome things are expreſsly ſaid to be withheld from him. For he himſelf, ſpeaking of his ſecond coming, ſays, Mark xiii. 32. *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.* In Matthew xxiv. 36. where the ſame obſervation is repeated, it is, *but my Father only.*

The apoſtles, notwithſtanding their attachment to their Lord and maſter, always preſerve the idea of his ſubordination to the Father, and conſider all his honour and power as derived from him. *He received from God the Father, honour and glory,* 2 Pet. i. 17. *It pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.* Col. i. 19. *The revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him,* Rev. i. 1. *Ye are Chriſt's, and Chriſt is God's,* 1 Cor. iii. 23. *The head of Chriſt is God.* 1 Cor. xi. 3.

The reaſon why Chriſt was ſo much diſtinguiſhed by God the Father, is frequently and fully expreſſed in the ſcriptures, viz. his obedience to the will of God, and eſpecially in his ſubmitting to die for the benefit of mankind. *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life.* John x. 17. *He humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the*

name

name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven and things in earth; and that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 8—11. *Who for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame, and is now ſitten down at the right hand of God.* Heb. xii. 2.

Our Lord ſays, that *he and his Father are one*, John x. 30. but he ſufficiently explains himſelf, when he prays that all his diſciples may be *one with him, and his Father, even as they are one*, John xvii. 11. *and he gives them the ſame glory which God had given to him*, ver. 22. Beſides, at the very time that our Lord ſays, that he and his Father are one, and in the very ſentence preceding it, ver. 29, he ſays, that *his Father is greater than all.* But how could the Father be greater than all, if there was any other, who was ſo much *one* with him, as to be, in all reſpects, *equal* to him?

The mere term *God* is, indeed, ſometimes uſed in a lower and inferior ſenſe in the ſcriptures, denoting *dominion* only; as when the Divine Being himſelf ſays, that *he will make Moſes a god to Pharaoh*, Exod. vii. 1. but, ſurely, there can be no danger of our miſtaking the ſenſe of ſuch phraſes as theſe; or if it were poſſible, our Lord himſelf has ſufficiently guarded againſt any miſconſtruction of them when applied to himſelf, by the explanation he has given of them; informing us, that, if, in the language of ſcripture, *they are called gods to whom the word of God came*, John x. 35.

(though, in fact, they were no other than mere men) he could not be guilty of blaſphemy in calling himſelf only *the ſon of God*. Now if Chriſt had been conſcious to himſelf that he was the *true and very God*, and that it was of the utmoſt conſequence to mankind that they ſhould regard him in that light, this was certainly a proper time for him to have declared himſelf, and not to have put his hearers off with ſuch an apology as this.

But even this power and dominion, to which Chriſt is advanced by God his Father, *who gave all power into his hands*, and who *made him head over all things to his church*, Eph. i. 22. this *mediatorial kingdom* of Chriſt (as it is ſometimes, and with ſufficient propriety, termed) is not to be perpetual. For the apoſtle Paul, ſpeaking, no doubt, under immediate inſpiration, expreſsly ſays, that when *the end ſhall come, that God ſhall have ſubdued all things to his Son* (in which he obſerves, that *he muſt be excepted who did ſubdue all things unto him*) *he muſt deliver up the kingdom to God, even the* FATHER, *and be himſelf ſubject to him who had put all things under him, that God may be all in all.* 1 Cor. xv. 24, &c. Nay, he himſelf ſays expreſsly, that he had not the diſpoſal of the higheſt offices of his kingdom, Matt. xx. 23. *To ſit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give; but it ſhall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

So clear, my brethren, ſo full, and ſo expreſs, is the uniform teſtimony of the ſcriptures to the great doctrine

doctrine of the proper *unity of God*, and of the ſubordination of Chriſt, and all other beings to him, that the prevalence of ſo impious a doctrine, as the contrary muſt be, can be aſcribed to nothing but to that *myſtery of iniquity*, which, though it *began to work* in the times of the apoſtles themſelves, was not then riſen to ſo enormous a height as to attack the ſupremacy of the *one living and true God*, and *give his peculiar glory to another*. This, my brethren, among other ſhocking corruptions of genuine chriſtianity, grew up with the ſyſtem of popery; and to ſhew that nothing is impoſſible to the ſuperſtition and credulity of men, when they are *become vain in their imaginations*, after exalting a man into a god, a creature into a creator, they made a piece of bread into one alſo, and then bowed down to, and worſhipped, the work of their own hands.

But though it ſeemed fit to the unſearchable wiſdom of God, that all the errors and abuſes of popery ſhould not be reformed at once; and though this great error was left untouched by the firſt reformers, bleſſed be God the bible is as open to us as it was to them; and by the exertion of the ſame judgment and ſpirit, we may free chriſtianity from the corruptions which they left adhering to it; and then, among other excellencies of our religion, *our Lord will be one and his name one*. Zech. xiv. 9.

If you aſk *who*, then, is Jeſus Chriſt, if he be not God; I anſwer, in the words of Peter, addreſſed to the

the Jews, after his reſurrection and aſcenſion, that *Jeſus of Nazareth was a* man *approved of God by miracles and wonders and ſigns, which God did by him.* Acts ii. 22. If you aſk what is meant by *man*, in this place; I anſwer, that *man*, if the word be uſed with any kind of propriety, muſt mean the ſame kind of being with yourſelves. I ſay, moreover, with the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, that *it became him by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, to make this great captain of our ſalvation in all reſpects, like unto us his brethren, that he might be made perfect through ſufferings*, Heb. ii. 10. 17. *and that he might have a feeling of all our infirmities*, iv. 13. For this reaſon it was that our Saviour and deliverer was not made of the nature of an *angel*, or like any ſuper-angelic being, but was of *the ſeed of Abraham.* ii. 16. that is (excluſive of the divinity of the Father, which reſided in him, and acted by him) a mere *man*, as other jews, and as we ourſelves alſo are.

Chriſt being made by the immediate hand of God, and not born in the uſual courſe of generation, is no reaſon for his not being conſidered as a man. For then Adam muſt not have been a man. But in the ideas of Paul, both *the firſt and ſecond Adam* (as Chriſt, on this account, is ſometimes called) were equally men: *By man came death, by man came alſo the reſurrection of the dead*, 1 Cor. xv. 21. And, certainly, in the reſurrection of a *man*, that is, of a perſon in all reſpects like ourſelves, we have a more

lively

lively hope of our own reſurrection; that of Chriſt being both a *proof* and a *pattern* of ours. We can, therefore, more firmly believe, that *becauſe he lives, we* who are the ſame that he was, and who ſhall undergo the ſame change by death that he did, *ſhall live alſo.* John xiv. 19.

'Till this great corruption of chriſtianity be removed, it will be in vain to preach the goſpel to jews, or mahometans, or, indeed, to any people who retain the uſe of the reaſon and underſtanding that God has given them. For how is it poſſible that *three* perſons, *Father, ſon,* and *holy ghoſt,* ſhould be ſeparately, each of them, poſſeſſed of all divine perfections, ſo as to be *true, very,* and *eternal* God, and yet that there ſhould be but *one God*; a truth which is ſo clearly and fully revealed, that it is not poſſible for men to refuſe their aſſent to it; or elſe it would, no doubt, have been long ago expunged from our creed, as utterly irreconcileable with the more favourite doctrine of a *trinity*, a term which is not to be found in the ſcriptures. Things *above* our reaſon may, for any thing that we know to the contrary, be true; but things expreſsly *contrary* to our reaſon, as that *three* ſhould be *one*, and *one three*, can never appear to us to be ſo.

With the jews, the doctrine of the divine unity is, and indeed juſtly, conſidered as the moſt fundamental principle of all religion. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord,* Deut. vi. 4. Mark xii. 29. To

preach

preach the doctrine of the trinity to the jews, can appear to them in no other light, than an attempt to ſeduce them into *idolatry*, a thing which they dare not entertain the moſt diſtant thought of.

The great creed of the mahometans is, that *there is one God, and Mahomet is his prophet.* Now that Mahomet is not the prophet of God, it is to be hoped, they may, in time, be made to believe; but we muſt not expect that they will ſo eaſily give up their faith in the unity of God. To make the goſpel, what it was originally, *glad tidings of great joy*; and as at laſt it certainly will be to all the nations of the world, we muſt free it from this moſt abſurd and impious doctrine, and alſo from many other corruptions which have been introduced into it. It can no otherwiſe appear worthy of God, and favourable to the virtue and happineſs of mankind.

Leſt ſome common objections ſhould hinder the reception of the great truth here contended for, I ſhall briefly conſider and reply to the principal of them. It is often ſaid that Chriſt ſpeaks of his *humanity* only, whenever he repreſents himſelf as inferior to the Father, and dependent upon him. But the ſcriptures themſelves are far from furniſhing the leaſt hint of any ſuch method of interpretation, though, according to the trinitarians, it is abſolutely neceſſary to the true underſtanding of them.

Beſides, when it is applied to the paſſages in queſtion, it is far from making them either true in themſelves,

ſelves, or agreeable to the obvious purport and deſign of the places in which they are introduced. I ſhall juſt mention a few. Could our Lord ſay with truth, and without an unworthy prevarication, that *the Father is the only true God*, John xvii. 3. if any other perſon, not implied in the term *Father*, was as much the true God as himſelf? Now the term *Father* being appropriated to what is called the *firſt* perſon in the godhead, cannot comprehend the *ſon*, who is called the *ſecond*. This key, therefore, is of no ſervice in this caſe, and our Lord, by expreſſing himſelf as he has done, could not but lead his hearers into what is called a dangerous miſtake.

When our Lord ſaid that *his Father was greater than he*, did he make any reſerve, and ſecretly mean, not *his whole ſelf*, but only *part*, and the inferior part of himſelf, the other part being equal in power and glory with the Father? How mean the prevarication, and how unworthy of our Lord!

When our Lord ſaid that *the time of the day of judgment was not known to himſelf, the ſon, but to the Father only*, could he mean that his *humanity* only did not know it, but that his *divinity* (which is ſuppoſed to be intimately united with his humanity) was as well acquainted with it as the Father himſelf? If the human nature of Chriſt had been incapable of having that knowledge communicated to it, the declaration would have been needleſs: but as that was not the caſe, his hearers muſt neceſſarily underſtand him

him as ſpeaking of himſelf in his higheſt capacity; as he certainly muſt do, if at all, when he ſpeaks of himſelf as the *ſon*, correſponding to the *Father*.

If Chriſt had not ſatisfied the jews that he did not mean to make himſelf equal with God, would they not have produced it againſt him at his trial, when he was condemned as a blaſphemer, becauſe he confeſſed that he was the Chriſt only: and yet no jew expected any thing more than a man for their Meſſiah, and our ſaviour no where intimates that they were miſtaken in that expectation. It is plain that Martha conſidered our Lord as a different perſon from God, and dependent upon God, when ſhe ſaid to him, John xi. 22. *I know that even now, whatſoever thou wilt aſk of God, God will give it thee.*

VI. Of atonement for sin by the death of Christ.

You have been taught by divines, that if Chriſt be not God, he could not have made an *infinite ſatisfaction* for the ſins of mankind. But, my brethren, where do you learn that the pardon of ſin, in a finite creature, requires an infinite ſatisfaction; or, indeed, any ſatisfaction at all, beſides repentance and reformation, on the part of a ſinner? We read in the ſcriptures that we are *juſtified freely by the grace of God*, Rom. iii. 34. but what free grace, or mercy, does there appear to have been in God, if Chriſt gave a full price for our juſtification, and bore the infinite weight

weight of divine wrath on our account. We are commanded to *forgive others, as we ourſelves hope to be forgiven*, Matt. vii. 14. and to be *merciful, as our Father, who is in heaven, is merciful.* But ſurely we are not thereby authoriſed to inſiſt upon any atonement, or ſatisfaction, before we give up our reſentment towards an offending and penitent brother. Indeed, how could it deſerve the name of forgiveneſs if we did? If he only *repent*, we are commanded to *forgive* him. Luke xvii. 4.

You read in the ſcriptures that Chriſt died a *ſacrifice for our ſins.* Heb. ix. 26. So he did, and a ſacrifice it was of *a ſweet ſmelling ſavour to God.* To die, as Chriſt did, in the glorious cauſe of truth and virtue; to die, as he did, in order to ſhow us an example of patiently ſuffering death for our religion, and the good of mankind, and in a firm hope of a reſurrection to a future and eternal life; to die, as he did, in expreſs atteſtation of his own divine miſſion, by his manifeſt reſurrection from the dead, and as the fulleſt proof of that doctrine, by means of which ſinners are continually reconciled unto God, was a noble ſacrifice indeed. We alſo are commanded to *preſent our bodies a living ſacrifice.* Rom. xii. 1. And we are required to offer the *ſacrifice of praiſe to God continually.* Heb. xiii. 15. But it is plain that all theſe are only figurative expreſſions, and uſed by way of compariſon. Neither our *bodies*, nor our *prayers*, can be conſidered as *real* ſacrifices; nor, are we, there-

fore, obliged to ſuppoſe that Chriſt was a real ſacrifice. And though we, like him, ſhould be called actually to *lay down our lives for our brethren*, 1 John iii. 16. which, in imitation of him, we are enjoined to be ready to do, we ſhould be ſacrifices only in the figurative ſenſe of the word.

It is true, that no man who is a ſinner (and all men have ſinned) can be *juſtified by his works*. We all ſtand in need of, and muſt have recourſe to, *free grace* and *mercy*; but it is a great diſhonour to God to ſuppoſe that this mercy and grace takes its riſe from any thing but his own eſſential goodneſs; and that he is not *of himſelf*, and independent of all foreign conſiderations whatever, what he ſolemnly declared himſelf to Moſes, at the time of the giving of the law, to be, namely, *a God merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, abundant in goodneſs and in truth*. Exod. xxxiv. 6. or that he requires any other ſacrifices, *than the ſacrifices of a broken ſpirit, and a contrite heart, which he will never deſpiſe*. Pſ. li. 17.

Can we wiſh for a more diſtinct and perfect repreſentation of the manner in which God forgives the ſins of his offſpring of mankind, than our ſaviour has exhibited to us in that moſt excellent parable of the *prodigal ſon*; in which the good father no ſooner ſees his child, who had abandoned him, and waſted his ſubſtance in riotous living, returning to him and to his duty; but without waiting for any atonement or propitiation, even *while he was yet a great way off, he*

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ran to him, fell upon his neck, and kiſſed him, Luke xv. 20. The ſame repreſentation we ſee in the parable of the creditor, who freely forgave his ſervant, becauſe he humbly *deſired* him. Let us not then, my brethren, deprive the ever-bleſſed God of the moſt glorious and honourable of all his attributes, and leave him nothing but *juſtice*, or rather *vengeance*, which is expreſsly ſaid to be *his ſtrange work*, Iſaiah xxviii. 21.

It is impoſſible to reconcile the doctrine of the ſatisfaction for ſin by the death of Chriſt, with the doctrine of *free grace*, which, according to the uniform tenor of the ſcriptures, is ſo fully diſplayed in the pardon of ſin, and the juſtification of ſinners. When, therefore, the apoſtle Paul ſays, Rom. iii. 24. *That we are juſtified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus*, the latter clauſe muſt be interpreted in ſuch a manner as to make it conſiſtent with the former; and it is far from requiring any force or ſtraining of the text to do it. For it is only neceſſary to ſuppoſe that our *redemption* (or, as the word properly ſignifies, and and is indeed frequently rendered by our tranſlators, our *deliverance*) from the power of ſin, *i. e.* our repentance and reformation, without which there is no promiſe of pardon, is effected by the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, who came *to call ſinners to repentance*; but ſtill God is to be conſidered as the *giver*, and not the *receiver*, with reſpect to our redemption; for we read

that he ſpared not his own ſon, but gave him up for us all. Rom. viii. 32.

To ſay that God the Father provided an atonement for his own offended juſtice is, in fact, to give up the doctrine. If a perſon owe me a ſum of money, and I chuſe to have the debt diſcharged, is it not the ſame thing, whether I remit the debt at once, or ſupply another perſon with money wherewith to pay me in the debtor's name? If ſatisfaction be made to any purpoſe, it muſt be in ſome manner, in which the offender may be a ſufferer, and the offended perſon a gainer; but it can never be reconciled to equity, or anſwer any good purpoſe whatever, to make the innocent ſuffer the puniſhment of the guilty. If, as Abraham ſays, it be *far from God to ſlay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous ſhould be as the wicked*, Gen. xviii. 25. much farther muſt it be from him to ſlay the righteous *inſtead* of the wicked.

I wiſh the zealous advocates for this doctrine would conſider, that if it be neceſſary, in the nature of things, that the juſtice of God be ſatisfied before any ſin can be pardoned, and Chriſt be God as well as the Father, whether the juſtice of Chriſt ought not to have been ſatisfied in the firſt place. If ſo, what other infinite being has made ſatisfaction to him? But if the divine nature of the ſon required no ſatisfaction, why ſhould the divine nature of the Father require any?

If

If it had been inconſiſtent with the divine juſtice to pardon ſin upon repentance only, without ſome farther ſatisfaction, we might have expected to have found it *expreſsly ſaid to be ſo* in the ſcriptures; but no ſuch declaration can be produced either from the Old or the New Teſtament. All that can be pretended is, that it may be *inferred* from it. Though good works are recommended to us in the ſtrongeſt manner, it is never with any ſalvo or caution, as if they were not *of themſelves* acceptable to God. The declarations of the divine mercy to the penitent are all abſolute, without the moſt diſtant hint of their having a reference to any *conſideration* on which they are made. *Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive* Pſalm lxxxiv. 5. *To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveneſſes, though we have rebelled againſt him,* Dan. ix. 3. When David and other penitents confeſs their ſins, and entreat for pardon, they refer themſelves to the divine mercy only, without ſeeming to have the leaſt idea of any thing farther. *Remember not the ſins of my youth, nor my tranſgreſſions; according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodneſs-ſake, O Lord.* Pſalm xxv. 6.

It is particularly remarkable, that when ſacrifices under the law are expreſsly ſaid not to be ſufficient for the pardon of ſin, we are never referred to any *more availing ſacrifice*; but to good works only. *Thou deſireſt not ſacrifice, elſe would I give it; thou delighteſt not in burnt-offering. The ſacrifices of the Lord are a*

broken ſpirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe. Pſalm li. 16, 17. If any of the jews had had the leaſt notion of the neceſſity of any atonement for the ſins of mankind, they could not but have expected a *ſuffering Meſſiah*; and yet it is plain that the very beſt of them had no ſuch idea. And though our ſaviour frequently explains the reaſon of his coming, and the neceſſity of his ſuffering, it is never on any ſuch account. If he had done it any where, it might have been expected in thoſe diſcourſes by which he endeavoured to reconcile his diſciples to his death, in his ſolemn prayer before his ſufferings, at the time of his agony in the garden, or when he was upon the croſs; yet nothing of this kind drops from him on any of theſe occaſions.

When our Lord deſcribes the proceedings of the day of judgment, he doth not repreſent the righteous as referring themſelves to the ſufferings or merit of their judge for their juſtification; and the judge himſelf expreſsly grounds it on their good works only. Though Peter, in his diſcourſe to the jews on the day of Pentecoſt, ſpeaks of their ſin in murdering Chriſt as of a heinous nature, he ſays not a word of the neceſſity of any atonement, or that an ample ſatisfaction had juſt been made, by means of their very wickedneſs. How would a modern divine have harangued upon the occaſion, and what advantage might he have taken of the cry of the jews; *his blood be upon us, and upon our children?* But Peter only

only exhorts to repentance, and ſpeaks of the death of Chriſt as an event that took place according to the fore-knowledge of God.

All the diſcourſes of Paul upon various occaſions in the book of Acts are entirely moral. In his celebrated ſpeech at Athens, he only urges his hearers to repentance, from the conſideration of a future judgment. He ſays not a word of what is now called the true goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. In ſhort, it is only from the literal interpretation of a few figurative expreſſions in the ſcriptures that this doctrine of *atonement*, as well as that of *tranſubſtantiation*, has been derived; and it is certainly a doctrine highly injurious to God: and if we, who are commanded to imitate God, ſhould act upon the maxims of it, it would be ſubverſive of the moſt amiable part of virtue in men. We ſhould be implacable and unmerciful, inſiſting upon the uttermoſt farthing.

Theſe, my brethren, are the principal heads on which I propoſed to expoſtulate with you, in the plain and free manner in which I have done. Do you yourſelves, *ſearch the ſcriptures and ſee whether theſe things be ſo. Pray to the God of truth to lead you into all truth, and may he give you underſtanding in all things.*

VII. PRAC-

VII. Practical consequences of the above doctrines.

The ſound knowledge of chriſtianity is not of importance as a matter of *ſpeculation* merely; though abſtract truths, eſpecially truths that relate to God, and the maxims of his moral government, are not without their utility and obligation: but the truths that I here contend for nearly affect the ſentiments of our hearts, and our conduct in life; as, indeed, has been ſhewn in many reſpects already. Conſidering God as poſſeſſed of the character in which ſome divines repreſent him, it is impoſſible, while human nature is what it is, that he ſhould appear in an amiable or reſpectable light. Such a God may, indeed, be the object of *dread* and *terror* to his creatures; but by no means of their *love* or *reverence*. And what is obedience without love? It cannot be that of the *heart*, which, however, is the only thing that is of any real value in religion. Alſo, how can a man love his fellow-creatures in general, when he conſiders the greateſt part of them as the objects of the divine abhorrence, and doomed by him to an everlaſting deſtruction, in which he believes that he himſelf muſt for ever rejoice? And what can remain of virtue, when theſe two great ſources of it, the *love of God and of mankind*, are thus groſsly corrupted? Laſtly, how muſt the genuine ſpirit of *mercy* and *forgiveneſs*, which ſo eminently diſtinguiſhes the goſpel

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of Chriſt, be debaſed, when God himſelf (whoſe conduct in this very reſpect is particularly propoſed to our imitation) is conſidered as never forgiving ſin without ſome previous atonement, ſatisfaction, or interceſſion?

On the other hand, loving God, as the compaſſionate Father of all his offspring, as *willing that all men ſhould be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of his truth*; and alſo loving all mankind as our brethren, as, together with ourſelves, the children of the ſame gracious Father, we cannot want the moſt generous and powerful motives *to do the will of God*, and *to provoke one another to love and to good works*; being in no fear of counteracting the ſecret deſigns of the Almighty, which we believe are aimed, not at the deſtruction, but the happineſs of all his creatures.

Think not, however, that I am ſo uncharitable as to ſuppoſe that all thoſe who profeſs to maintain the doctrines I have been arguing againſt, are univerſally deſtitute of the genuine love of God, or of their fellow-creatures. I am ſenſible, and truly thankful, that it is not always the conſequence; but it is becauſe the hearts of ſuch perſons are really influenced by better principles than thoſe which they avow. They by no means habitually regard the Divine Being in the light in which their principles repreſent him, but as the *true Father* of all the creatures that he has made, and, as ſuch, ſincerely deſirous to promote their beſt intereſts.

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Alſo, notwithſtanding, if they be aſked, they will not heſitate to ſay, that Chriſt is God, the ſupremacy of the Father, even with reſpect to the Son, is, at the ſame time, the real ſentiment of their minds; and when they lift up their hearts to God, it is only *God the Father* that is the proper object of their adoration. The conſtant tenor of the ſcriptures is ſo contrary to their profeſſed creed, that though they dare not call it in queſtion, it is not able to counteract the plainer, the more conſiſtent, and the better principles which will force themſelves upon their minds from converſing with the bible.

Beſides, it requires more ſubtlety and refinement to enter into the principles above-mentioned, than the common people are maſters of. They cannot conceive how one man ſhould ſin, and another perſon, ſix thouſand years after, be guilty of that ſin, and puniſhable for it; how one perſon's righteouſneſs ſhould be conſidered as the righteouſneſs of another; or that three diſtinct perſons ſhould each of them be God, and yet that there ſhall be no more Gods than one.

Men of plain underſtandings, in fact, never do believe any ſuch thing; nor can it be ſuppoſed that the goſpel, which was intended to be the ſolid foundation of the faith, hope, and joy of common people, ſhould require ſo much acuteneſs, as is neceſſary to give even a plauſible colour to theſe ſtrange aſſertions. The attempt to explain them (and, 'till they be explained,

they

they can no more be believed than a propoſition in an unknown tongue) can lead to nothing but endleſs and unprofitable controverſy. It is happy, therefore, that ſo many perſons make a better uſe of the goſpel than their tenets would lead them to do, and that they conſider it chiefly as a *rule of life*, and the *foundation of hope after death.* But, as far as the principles I have been arguing againſt are believed, they cannot but do harm to thoſe who entertain them, as well as bring diſgrace upon the chriſtian name; both which every *lover of the goſpel* ſhould endeavour to prevent.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED DOCTRINES.

I. A CONCISE HISTORY OF OPINIONS CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST.

You will ſay, if Chriſt be not really *God*, but merely *a man*, though inſpired and aſſiſted by God, how came the chriſtian world to fall into ſo great an error? In return, I might aſk, how, if Chriſt be truly God, equal to the Father, ſo many chriſtians, and eſpecially the jewiſh chriſtians, and many others in the very early ages of the chriſtian church, came to think him to be merely a man; when it may be eaſily conceived that, on many accounts, chriſtians, who were continually reproached with the meanneſs of their maſter, would be diſpoſed to *add to*, rather than to *take from* his dignity? But it is not difficult to

ſhew

ſhew by what *means*, and by what *ſteps*, chriſtians came to think as the generality of them now do.

It was the univerſal opinion of philoſophers, at the time of the promulgation of chriſtianity, that the ſouls of all men had exiſted before they were ſent to animate the bodies that were provided for them here, and alſo that all ſouls were *emanations*, or *parts detached* from the deity. For at that time there was no idea of any ſubſtance being properly *immaterial*, and *indiviſible*. When theſe philoſophers became chriſtians, and yet were aſhamed of being the diſciples of a man who had been crucified, they naturally gave a diſtinguiſhed rank to the ſoul of Chriſt before he came into the world. They even went one ſtep farther, and maintained that Chriſt had a body in appearance only, and not in reality, and therefore that he ſuffered nothing at all when he was ſcourged and crucified.

This opinion the apoſtle John reprobates with great ſeverity, and even calls it *Antichriſtian*, 1 John iv. 3. whereas though it is acknowledged that the other opinion, viz. that of Chriſt being *merely a man*, exiſted in the times of the apoſtles, it is remarkable that this apoſtle takes no notice of it. It was plainly the doctrine of thoſe only who maintained that Chriſt was not truly a man that gave this apoſtle any diſturbance, or he would never have ſaid as he does, 1 John iv. 2. *Every ſpirit that confeſſeth that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh* (that is, was truly a man) *is of God.*

After

After this, philoſophizing chriſtians began to add to the pre-exiſtent dignity of Chriſt in another way, and at length, carried it much higher than thoſe upon whom this apoſtle animadverted with ſo much ſeverity. They ſaid that Chriſt was originally *in God*, being his *reaſon*, or *logos* which came *out of him*, and was *perſonified* before the creation of the world, in which he was the immediate agent, and that this new perſonage was henceforth the medium of all the divine communications to mankind, having been the perſon who ſpake to Adam in paradiſe, to Noah, to Abraham, and all the patriarchs, who delivered the law from mount Sinai, and laſtly inhabited the body of Jeſus of Nazareth.

On this principle they explained many paſſages in the Old Teſtament, in which the *word of God* is ſpoken of, as that of the pſalmiſt, *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, &c.* making this *word* to be *a perſon*, diſtinct from God, whoſe word it was; whereas nothing can be more plain, than that by the *word of God* in this place is meant the *power of God*, exerted with as much eaſe as men utter words.

Theſe philoſophizing chriſtians took great pains to explain how the *reaſon* or *wiſdom* of God could thus become a perſon, diſtinct from God, and yet God continue a reaſonable being; but their account of it is too trifling to be recited in this place. However, it was far from being pretended, in general, that the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt was ſuch

a myſtery as could not be explained. For by *myſtery* they only meant ſomething of a ſolemn nature, which was unknown 'till it was revealed or explained. And indeed this is plainly the uſe of the word *myſtery* in the New Teſtament; and it was alſo the uſual meaning of the word when the preſent tranſlation of the bible was made; the *myſteries of any particular trade* being the *ſecrets* of that trade, which yet every maſter taught his apprentices.

In this ſtate the doctrine continued 'till after the council of Nice in the year of our Lord 325; but in all this time a real ſuperiority was always acknowledged in the Father, as the only ſource of divinity; and it was even explicitly acknowledged that there was a time when the ſon of God had no ſeparate exiſtence, being only the *reaſon of God*, juſt as the reaſon of man is a part, or a property of man. One of the moſt eminent of the chriſtian fathers ſays, "There was a time when God was neither a father, "nor a judge; for he could not be a father before "he had a ſon, nor a judge before there was ſin."

So far were they from ſuppoſing the ſon of God to be *equal to the Father*, that when they were charged, as they frequently were, with making *two Gods*, they generally replied, that the ſon was only *God of God*, as having proceeded from a ſuperior God, which is the language of the Nicene creed; whereas the Father was *God of himſelf* (αὐτόθεος) by which they meant

meant *underived*, which they held to be the prerogative of the Father only.

In all this time the jewiſh chriſtians, who were not tainted with the heathen philoſophy, maintained the doctrine of the proper and ſimple humanity of Chriſt. Athanaſius himſelf was ſo far from being able to deny this, that he ſays all the jews were ſo fully perſuaded that their Meſſiah was to be a man like themſelves, that the apoſtles were obliged to uſe great caution in divulging the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt. He ſays, that the reaſon why Peter, Acts ii. 22. only calls him *a man approved of God*, and why, on other occaſions in the courſe of that book and other parts of the New Teſtament, he is ſimply called *a man*, was, that at firſt the apoſtles did not think proper to do more than prove that Jeſus was the *Chriſt*, or Meſſiah, and that they thought it prudent to divulge the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt by degrees. He likewiſe ſays, that the jews of thoſe times, meaning the jewiſh chriſtians, being in this error themſelves drew the gentiles into it. Athanaſius greatly commends the apoſtles for this addreſs in their circumſtances. But what the apoſtles ſcrupled to teach, we ſhould be ſcrupulous in believing. Chryſoſtom gives the ſame account of the ſituation of the apoſtles with reſpect to the jews.

It alſo clearly appears from eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, that the unlearned among the chriſtians were exceedingly averſe to the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt,

even in the qualified ſenſe above mentioned, oppoſing, what they called, the ſupreme *monarchy* of the Father, to the novel doctrine of the divinity of the ſon; and the philoſophizing chriſtians were obliged to make laboured apologies to theſe early unitarians, acknowledging the perfect inferiority of the ſon to the Father. But at length theſe unitarians, who are expreſsly ſaid to have been the majority of chriſtians in the third century, were overborne by the ſuperior influence and popularity of their adverſaries, who, from believing Chriſt to be God in an inferior qualified ſenſe of the word, came, in the natural courſe of things, to believe him to be God equal to the Father himſelf, and to have exiſted from all eternity independently of him. But it was ſeveral centuries before this doctrine was fully eſtabliſhed. And the holy ſpirit was generally conſidered either as the ſame thing with *the power of God*, that is, God himſelf (juſt as the *ſpirit of a man* is a man) or elſe a ſuperangelic being, inferior both to the Father and the ſon, 'till after the council of Nice.

In the mean time, Arius and his followers, ſhocked at the doctrine of Chriſt being of *the ſame ſubſtance* with the Father, maintained that, though he had pre-exiſted, and had been the medium of all the diſpenſations of God to mankind, he was, like all other derived beings, *created out of nothing*; the opinion of all ſouls having been emanations from the ſupreme mind being then generally denied by chriſtians.

Thus

Thus did it pleaſe God, for reaſons unknown to us, to permit the riſe and general ſpread of the trinitarian and Arian opinions, as he permitted the riſe and amazing power of the *man of ſin*, and many corruptions and abuſes of chriſtianity utterly ſubverſive of the genuine purity of the goſpel, 'till the full time for the reformation of this and other groſs corruptions of chriſtianity was come.

I. A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE, ORIGINAL SIN, AND PREDESTINATION.

It was a controverſy about the nature and uſe of baptiſm that occaſioned the ſtarting of the doctrine of *the natural impotence of man to do what God requires of him*, of the imputation of the *ſin of Adam* to all his poſterity, and of the arbitrary *predeſtination* of certain individuals of the human race to everlaſting life, while the reſt of mankind were left in a ſtate of *reprobation*; and this was ſo late as four hundred years after Chriſt. Before that time it had been the univerſal opinion of chriſtians, and of Auſtin himſelf, who firſt advanced the doctrines above-mentioned, that every man has the power of obeying or diſobeying the laws of God, that all men may be ſaved if they will, and that no decrees of God will be the leaſt obſtruction in the way of any man's ſalvation.

But Pelagius, a man of good underſtanding, and exemplary morals, in his declamations againſt ſome abuſes of baptiſm, aſſerting, that baptiſm itſelf does not waſh away ſin, as was then generally ſuppoſed (on which account it was the cuſtom with many to defer it 'till near death) nor could have been appointed for that purpoſe, becauſe infants, which have no ſin, are baptiſed; Auſtin, in oppoſition to him, maintained that, though infants have no *actual ſin* of their own, they have the ſtain of *original ſin* in which they were born; though he was far from aſſerting that Adam was the *federal head* of all his poſterity, and that his ſin was properly *imputed* to them. This was an improvement upon the doctrine in after-ages. What Auſtin maintained was, that men derive a *corrupt nature*, or a *proneneſs to ſin*, from Adam.

Alſo, having been led, in the courſe of this controverſy, to aſſert, that by means of original ſin no man had it in his power to attain to ſalvation, he was obliged to maintain that it depended upon the *will of God* only who ſhould be finally ſaved, and that he *predeſtinated* whom he thought proper for that purpoſe, independently of any foreſight of their good works, which it was not in their power to perform without his immediate aſſiſtance, and in which he muſt be the firſt mover.

But notwithſtanding this doctrine of the corruption of human nature, the neceſſity of divine grace for the production of every good thought or action, and

the

the predeſtination to eternal life without regard to good works, advanced by Auſtin, prevailed in the weſt, chiefly through the authority of his name; it was never received in the eaſtern church, and was much controverted, and held with various modifications, in the weſtern. Alſo together with this doctrine of grace, the divines of the roman-catholic church held the doctrine of *human merit*, founded on the right uſe of the grace of God to man. And the preſent doctrines of *grace*, *original ſin*, and *predeſtination*, were never maintained in their full extent 'till after the reformation by Luther, who was a friar of the order of Auſtin, had been much attached to his doctrines, and made great uſe of them in oppoſing the popiſh doctrines of *indulgence*, founded on that of *merit*.

III. A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

THE doctrine of *atonement*, or of the neceſſity of *ſatisfaction* being made to the juſtice of God by the death of Chriſt, in order to his remitting the ſins of men, aroſe from an abuſe of the figurative language of ſcripture, as the doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation* alſo did. But for ſeveral centuries theſe figurative expreſſions were underſtood and applied in a manner very different from what they now are.

It was granted by ſome pretty early writers, that we were *bought* (or *redeemed*) *with a price*; but then,

then, as we had been the ſlaves of *ſin*, and were redeemed by God, who ranſomed us by the death of his ſon, it was maintained 'till after the time of Auſtin (the principal author of all the rigid doctrines that are now called *Calviniſt*) that the price of our redemption was paid not to God, but by God to the *devil*, in whoſe power we were. Of this opinion was Auſtin himſelf, who wrote largely on the ſubject in his treatiſe on the doctrine of the trinity. It was long after his time before we find any traces of its being generally thought that the price of redemption was paid to the offended juſtice of God and the preſent doctrine of atonement, founded on the idea of the abſolute neceſſity of an infinite ſatisfaction being made by one infinite being for offences of an infinite magnitude, as committed againſt another infinite being, is ſubſequent to the reformation. This doctrine was advanced by the reformers in the courſe of their controverſy with the papiſts, about the doctrine of human merit, works of penance, and the power of granting indulgences. Now can it be ſuppoſed that a doctrine of ſo much importance, as this is always repreſented to be, ſhould have been unknown ſo many ages?

Thus all theſe boaſted ancient doctrines are in fact of late date, either having ariſen from the principles of heathen philoſophy, or having been ſtarted and extended in the courſe of controverſy, one falſe poſition making another neceſſary for its ſupport;

and

and an air of awful and deep *myſtery* has been no ſmall recommendation of them to many of the more ignorant.

The doctrine of the *trinity*, having been one of the earlieſt corruptions of chriſtianity, will probably be one of the laſt to be completely eradicated. But the time, I truſt, is faſt-approaching, when, by means of the zeal of truly enlightened and good men in this great cauſe, this fundamental error, which gives ſuch great and juſt cauſe of offence to jews and mahometans, will be removed, and all that has been built upon it will fall to the ground.

The Conclusion.

My chriſtian brethren, if the reading of this addreſs give riſe to any *doubts* or *ſcruples* in your minds, with reſpect to ſome doctrines which you have been uſed to conſider as true and *fundamental* in the chriſtian religion, inquire farther; and if you be *ſatisfied* that you have hitherto been miſtaken, dare to avow the truth, and act conſiſtently with it. Dread the conſequences of joining with an enlightened mind, in the *idolatrous worſhip of any creature*, though enjoined by any human authority; remembering the words of Chriſt, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* Matt. iv. 10. and alſo that awful voice from heaven reſpecting all antichriſtian corruptions of the goſpel in myſtical Babylon; *Come out of her, my people,*

people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Rev. xviii. 4.

Think not to avail yourſelves of the wretched equivocation of many divines, who imagine that they may ſafely aſcribe all divine honours to Jeſus Chriſt, on account of his *union with the Father*, when they believe no more of his *proper divinity* than profeſſed arians or ſocinians. By this artifice they ſecure the reputation of orthodoxy; but let them conſider the value of the purchaſe, and the price they give for it. To mere worldly conſiderations, to the *praiſe* of *men*, or *filthy lucre*, they ſacrifice that *integrity*, for the loſs of which worlds cannot compenſate.

The publiſher of theſe tracts does not conceal his name through the fear of any thing that *men* can *ſay of him*, or *do to him*, but merely to give what he has written a better chance of being read without prejudice. What he has done is out of a ſincere good-will and compaſſion to the multitude, who believe *they know not what*, or *why*, and what is of more conſequence, who *know not what ſpirit they are of*; but inſtead of *ſpeaking the truth in love*, miſtake bitterneſs and rancour for a zeal for God and his truth, and alſo for the ſake of a better ſort of people, who are unhappily drawn into the ſame deluſions.

Conſidering the deference which the common people always pay to the judgment of men of learning,

ing, there can be little doubt but that, if thoſe perſons who, having ſtudied this ſubject, have been convinced that Chriſt is not God, and ought not to be worſhipped as God, had openly avowed their opinion, and had had recourſe to no mean ſubterfuge or equivocation, this fundamental article of true and rational chriſtianity had long ago been the prevailing belief; and our religion appearing more worthy of its divine author, there would have been, at this time, fewer unbelievers in all chriſtian countries, and many more converts made to it from other religions. And, compared with this glorious advantage, what has been gained by all the arts and ſophiſtry of miniſters, who have concealed their real meaning under ambiguous expreſſions, leſt, as they pretend, they ſhould too much ſhock the prejudices of their hearers?

That ſome regard ſhould be paid to the prejudices of the *weak* is allowed; but let not this lead men to criminal diſſimulation, or extend to things of ſo much importance as this, reſpecting the *unity of God.* In this caſe, let us keep at the greateſt diſtance from every thing that is *diſingenuous*; let the truth be ſpoken in the moſt explicit manner, and let the conſequences be left to the *power of truth*, and the *God of truth.* Beſides, it is impoſſible that while men retain depraved and unworthy notions of God, their devotion ſhould be ſuch as God requires; ſo that this pretended tenderneſs injures

injures thoſe who are the objects of it, as well as bears an unfavourable aſpect on the intereſts of chriſtianity more at large. Such are the effects of the *wiſdom of this world*, when it is put in the place of *ſincerity*, and a regard to the plain *truth of the goſpel* of Jeſus Chriſt!

Profeſſing the purity of the chriſtian faith, let us be careful, my brethren, to adorn it by a blameleſs and exemplary life. More eſpecially let us beware that we do not wear *the form of godlineſs*, when our hearts are deſtitute of the *power* of it; and that we indulge no ſecret hope, that by any peculiar ſtrictneſs and auſterity of life, by frequent or long prayers, or by attending on much preaching, and uſing other *means* of religion, we ſhall atone for a neglect of *the weightier matters of the law, righteouſneſs, mercy, and truth.* Let the integrity of our hearts appear in the chearfulneſs of our countenances; and let us ſhew that we *love God whom we have not ſeen*, by loving our *brethren whom we do ſee*, and by being always ready to do them every kind office in our power.

To judge of our love to God, or of our love to Chriſt, directly, by what we *feel* when we think of them, eſpecially when we are excluded from the world, as is the cuſtom with many, is to expoſe ourſelves to the groſſeſt and moſt dangerous deluſions. We find in the ſcriptures a much plainer, and ſafer method of judging in both theſe caſes.

This

This, ſays the apoſtle John, *is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. If ye love me*, ſays our Lord, *keep my commandments. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you*; and *this is my commandment, that ye love one another. By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one for another.*

Remember that true chriſtian charity is humble, modeſt, and diffident; and that he is pronounced to be happy, who *feareth always*, ſo as to be circumſpect in thought, word, and deed; and that, for this purpoſe, we are to *put on the whole armour of God*, that we may withſtand the temptations of the world.

Rather than indulge a phariſaical pride, in recounting your *experiences*, boaſting how vile you have once been, or thought yourſelves to be, in order to make others believe how holy and ſanctified you are now, content yourſelves with the language and practice of the humble publican, who, ſpeaking to God and his own heart only, cried, *God be merciful to me a ſinner.*

Rejoice in all the real good you ſee done by others, whatever may be their ill-will, or oppoſition to you; and be eſpecially upon your guard, leſt your juſt averſion to what is corrupt in the principles or practices of others lead you to diſlike what is good in them. Let not the *phariſaical rigour* of ſome throw you into the oppoſite extreme of *levity*; and let not their laying an undue ſtreſs

upon praying, preaching, and other means of religion, make you neglect them, as we are too apt to do with reſpect to any thing that has been much abuſed.

Having enough to do with our own hearts, let us be particularly upon our guard againſt that ſpirit of *cenſorioufneſs*, which many profeſſing chriſtians indulge with too little reſtraint. Let us remember that the true chriſtian *beareth all things, and hopeth all things*; and let us never forget the awful warning of our Lord, *Judge not that ye be not judged: for with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged; and with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again.*

Be not moved, my brethren, by the raſh cenſures and reproaches of others. *Perſecution*, of ſome kind, is what *all who live godlily in Chriſt Jeſus muſt expect to ſuffer in this world.* To their *wrath, anger, clamour, evil-ſpeaking, and malice*, anſwer with *the wiſdom that is from above*; *which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be intreated*; *full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſy.* Let us even rejoice that we are *counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame*, and inſult, *for the ſake of Chriſt*, though our ſufferings come not from the profeſſed enemies of Chriſt, but from *falſe brethren*; and let us not be concerned at being counted *deceivers*, if we be conſcious to ourſelves that we truly love the goſpel, and that we labour to promote and adorn it.

You

You will be called *arminians* and *ſocinians* by your adverſaries, or ſomething elſe that ſhall expreſs more of their hatred and diſlike. But let not this offend you. If there be any proper meaning in thoſe epithets, it can only be that you hold certain opinions which they deem to be falſe, but which you cheriſh as the only genuine doctrines of the goſpel. If nothing more is meant by thoſe terms, beſides mere *reproach* and *abuſe*, think yourſelves happy, as being *reproached for the name of Chriſt.* 1 Peter iv. 14. With many the appellation of *Lutheran* or *Calviniſt* is reproachful, and with many alſo that of *Chriſtian* is much more ſo. Beſides, both Arminius and Socinus were men who loved the goſpel, and who ſuffered more for their adherence to it, than moſt others of the reformers, eſpecially Socinus.

If we be chriſtians indeed, we ſhall conſider ourſelves as *not of this world*, but as *citizens of heaven. The friendſhip of this world*, therefore, together with popularity, and ſucceſs in it, ought not to be conſidered as any object for us. If we *abide in Chriſt*, and *walk even as he alſo walked*, not *being conformed to this world, but being transformed by the renewing of our minds*, we are *heirs of a far* nobler inheritance, *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for us; and when Chriſt, who is our life, and for whom we ſuffer reproach, ſhall appear, we alſo ſhall appear with him in glory.*

I ſhall conclude this addreſs with a word of advice and exhortation to all *unitarians*, whether they be members of the eſtabliſhed church, or of any ſociety of *diſſenters* in this country.

Of ſuch great importance is the doctrine of the *divine unity*, that nothing will more fully juſtify a ſeparation from any chriſtian church that does not openly profeſs it, and much more from thoſe that avow the contrary doctrine, directing prayers, and paying ſupreme worſhip, to any other than the *God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

It was for the preſervation of this great and fundamental doctrine, that Abraham, and his family by Iſaac and Jacob, were ſeparated from the reſt of the world, and made a diſtinct people, as it were, to be the depoſitaries of the true religion, which conſiſts principally in the ſole worſhip of the one true and living God, the maker and preſerver of all things. The ſame important doctrine was uniformly taught by Chriſt and the apoſtles; though chriſtians in after-times, like the Iſraelites after the time of Joſhua, relapſed into that idolatry which has generally prevailed to this day.

If it was a ſufficient juſtification of the firſt reformers, that they conſidered the church from which they ſeparated as worſhiping ſaints and angels; will it not juſtify your ſeparation from their partial reformations, that you conſider them as praying to and worſhiping one whom you conſider

der as a *man* like yourſelves, though honoured and diſtinguiſhed by God above all other men?

To join habitually in public worſhip with trinitarians, is countenancing that worſhip, which you muſt conſider as *idolatrous*; and which, however innocent in them, is highly criminal in you. If they think it a point of conſcience not to go to maſs in popiſh countries, becauſe, in their opinion, it is idolizing a *piece of bread*, you ought to make a point of conſcience of not worſhiping with them, becauſe, in your opinion, it is idolizing *a man*, who is as much a creature of God as a piece of bread, and juſt as improper an object of worſhip.

Beſides, the great offence to jews, mahometans, and the world at large, being the doctrine of the *trinity*, it is highly neceſſary that ſocieties of chriſtians ſhould be formed expreſsly on this principle of the *divine unity*, that it may be evident to all the world, that there are chriſtians, and ſocieties of chriſtians, who hold the doctrine of the trinity in as much abhorrence as they themſelves can do. For the converſion of jews or mahometans to chriſtianity, while it is ſuppoſed to contain the doctrine the trinity, no perſon who knows, or has heard of jews or mahometans, can ever expect.

You will ſay we unitarians are but few, even in large towns, and ſtill fewer in villages, and there are no men of leiſure or learning among us. But was not this the caſe with the primitive chriſtians,

and yet this circumſtance was no obſtruction to the forming of a chriſtian church in any place? We read of churches in private houſes.

Aſſemble together, therefore, in the name and in the fear of God, and according to the order of the goſpel, every Lord's-day, if there be no more than *two or three*, or even a ſingle family of you in a place; read the ſcriptures, and pray together. Alſo read ſermons, or other works of moral inſtruction, of which there is, happily, no want at this day. Baptize, and adminiſter the lord's ſupper among yourſelves; and as you grow more numerous, form yourſelves upon ſome regular plan of church-diſcipline, that it may be the means of uniting and keeping you together; and rigorouſly exclude all perſons whoſe conduct would be a reproach to you.

As to a *learned miniſtry*, it is acknowledged to be deſirable, where it can be had, but it is by no means neceſſary. The graveſt and moſt reſpectable perſons among you, and thoſe who have the moſt leiſure, will, in the character of *elders*, ſelect and read proper prayers and diſcourſes, and perform all the offices of chriſtian ſocieties, juſt as well as the elders in the primitive churches, who had no ſuch helps as you now have; and miraculous powers were not of long continuance with them.

If you be at preſent members of the eſtabliſhed church, you will find a *reformed liturgy* ready prepared for your uſe by Mr. Lindſey. But if you ſhould

ſhould prefer the mode of worſhip among the diſſenters (but men of ſenſe will not make much account of ſuch diſtinctions) you may in many authors, eſpecially at the end of Mr. Holland's ſermons, find forms of ſuch prayers as you have been uſed to: or you may apply to diſſenting miniſters of your acquaintance, who will chearfully give you any aſſiſtance in their power.

All theſe are trifling obſtacles to a great deſign. It requires indeed a proper degree of chriſtian *zeal*; but the object is worthy of it. The example has been already ſet in Scotland, where it was leaſt of all to be expected; and the ſucceſs has been ſuch as ſhould abundantly encourage ſimilar attempts in this country.

The baptiſts and methodiſts, not laying much ſtreſs upon a learned miniſtry, flouriſh greatly; the independents are now taking the ſame methods, and with the ſame ſucceſs; while the rational diſſenters, fancying they would be diſgraced by the want of a learned miniſtry, are dwindling away almoſt every where.

Whatever inconvenience may ariſe from mere *novelty*, it is ſoon over; and as the methodiſts are collecting into bodies in all places, a thing of this kind will excite much leſs ſurprize. But what impreſſion ought the cenſure of the world to make upon thoſe who, as chriſtians, profeſs to be *above the world*, and to *rejoice that they are counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame* in the cauſe of Chriſt, and to think themſelves *happy* if they be *reproached* on that account.

count. You ſhould imagine that you hear that awful *voice from heaven*, recorded in the book of Revelation, ch. xviii. 24. *Come out of her*, (i. e. myſtical Babylon, the great ſcource of all the corruptions of chriſtianity) *my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

Be careful, however, to do this in the ſpirit of chriſtian charity, which ſhould be extended to all men, but eſpecially to all that bear the chriſtian name. Conſider them as men who are in an error, which is always involuntary. Endeavour to remove the prejudices they unhappily lie under, but forbear all angry reproaches, all inſult, and even ridicule; for religion is a ſerious thing, and *brotherly love* is the very eſſence of it. And if this love is to be extended even to *enemies*, much more ſhould it be indulged towards our merely *miſtaken friends.*

The author of this addreſs intirely approves of *Mr. Lindſey's Liturgy*, or that which was uſed at the Octagon Chapel in Liverpool; and he would recommend *reſponſes*, eſpecially to ſocieties formed in this manner, in which it is particularly deſirable, that the members, being nearly on a level, ſhould each bear his part in the ſervice. But leſt ſome, from the force of habit, ſhould not be able to reconcile themſelves to the uſe of a liturgy, and object to the ſcheme on that account, he has drawn up, and publiſhed a ſet of *Forms for all the occaſions of unitarian ſocieties.*

THE

THE
TRIUMPH OF TRUTH;
BEING AN ACCOUNT OF
THE TRIAL OF MR. ELWALL,
FOR
HERESY AND BLASPHEMY,
AT STAFFORD ASSIZES.

THE PREFACE.

THIS trial is printed from the author's ſecond edition, even without altering ſuch phraſes as are peculiar to that denomination of chriſtians with whom he generally aſſociated, and whoſe ſtyle he adopted; and certainly the quakers ought to think themſelves honoured even by this kind of relation to Mr. Elwall. Such firmneſs in the cauſe of truth, and ſuch preſence of mind in aſſerting and vindicating it, as appear in this trial, are truly apoſtolical, and have had but few examples ſince the firſt promulgation of chriſtianity. It is impoſſible for an unprejudiced perſon to read this account of it (which is written with ſo much true ſimplicity, perſpicuity, and ſtrength of evidence) without feeling the greateſt veneration for the writer, the fulleſt conviction and love of the truth, and a proportional zeal in maintaining it. I ſhould even think it impoſſible for the moſt prejudiced perſon to read it attentively, but, if he uſe no violence with his own mind, he will receive ſome favourable impreſſions both of the author, and of that cauſe, which he ſupports with ſuch becoming dignity, and with a temper and diſpoſition of mind, in every reſpect worthy of a true chriſtian.

So great was the force of truth on this memorable occaſion, that a reputable and honeſt jury, directed by a good-natured and ſenſible judge, acquitted the criminal

criminal contrary to the expreſs laws of this country, according to which this glorious man ought to have been ſentenced to a ſevere puniſhment, as a convicted and avowed *blaſphemer*. What muſt a lover of *truth* and of *free enquiry*, as ſubſervient to truth, think of ſuch laws, and of the eccleſiaſtical conſtitution of the countries in which they are in force!

It is to be wiſhed that ſuch a monument of the TRIUMPH OF TRUTH might be conſtantly held out to the view of all mankind, and particularly in this country where it was exhibited.

The dedication of the treatiſe, on account of which Mr. Elwall was proſecuted, is dated *the eighth day of the ſecond month*, 1724; he ſpeaks of his trial in a treatiſe intitled, *A declaration againſt all kings and temporal powers under heaven*, printed in 1732: and judge Denton, before whom he was tried, went the Oxford circuit in 1726 and 1728. From theſe circumſtances it may be concluded, that the former of theſe years is the date of this remarkable trial, eſpecially as in ſome part of the ſame year 1726 Mr. Elwall publiſhed another defence of the unitarian ſyſtem, in a treatiſe which he intitled *Dagon fallen before the Ark of God*, which would probably have been mentioned in the courſe of the trial, if it had been publiſhed at that time.

TRIAL OF MR. E. ELWALL, &c.

BECAUSE ſo many perſons have earneſtly deſired to read this trial, I have here publiſhed a ſecond edition of it, in order to encourage all honeſt men, who have the eternal law of God on their ſide, not to fear the faces of prieſts, who are generally the grand adverſaries of liberty and truth, and the baſtions and bulwarks of all ceremonies, fopperies, and abſurd doctrines that are in the world.

I do this for the glory of the Moſt High God, and for the honour of his ſacred law, and for the good of all my fellow-creatures; that they may obey God, and not man; Chriſt, and not the pope; the prophets and apoſtles, and not prelates and prieſts; and God knoweth this is my ſincere deſire, that all religion and ſpiritual things may be perfectly free, neither forced nor hindered; this being the true liberty of the goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who ſaid, *The kings of the gentiles exerciſe authority, but it ſhall not be ſo with you.*

About fourteen years ago I wrote a book entitled, "A True Teſtimony for God and his "ſacred Law; being a plain, honeſt defence of "the firſt commandment of God, againſt all the "trinitarians under heaven, *Thou ſhalt have no* "*other Gods but me.*" I lived then at *Wolverhampton* in *Staffordſhire*, where my anceſtors have lived

above eleven hundred years, ever-ſince the *Saxons* conquered the *Britons*.

When this book was publiſhed, the prieſts in the country began to rage, eſpecially the prieſts of *Wolverhampton*; who had a great hand in the ſeveral troubles I underwent. In ſhort, they never ceaſed 'till they had procured a large indictment againſt me at *Stafford* aſſizes; where I felt the power of God, enabling me to ſpeak before a great number of people; being accuſed of hereſy, &c. But I truly anſwered, as my beloved brother *Paul* did in his day, viz. *In that way which ſome call hereſy, ſo chuſe I to ſerve the God of my fathers, believing all that is written in the law and the prophets.*

Afterthe long indictment was read, I was aſked if I pleaded guilty, or not guilty. I ſaid I was not guilty of any evil, that I knew of, in writing that book; but if they meant whether I wrote the book or not (for they had quoted many pages of the book in that indictment) I owned I did write it; and that if I might have liberty to ſpeak, I believed I ſhould make it manifeſt to be the plain truth of God.

Then the judge ſtood up, and ſaid, "Mr. *Elwall*, "I ſuppoſe you have had a copy of your indict-"ment?" I told him I had not had any copy of it. Upon which he turned towards the prieſts, and told them that I ought to have had a copy of it. But they not anſwering he turned to me, and ſaid,

That

That if I would give bail, and be bound to appear at the next aſſizes, he would defer my trial 'till then. But I told him, I would not give bail, neither ſhould any man be bound for me; that if the prince of *Wales* himſelf would, he ſhould not; for, ſaid I, I have an innocent breaſt, and I have injured no man; and therefore I deſire no other favour, but that I may have liberty to plead to the indictment myſelf.

Upon which he ſaid, very courteouſly, You may. The judge having given me liberty of pleading to the indictment, I began my ſpeech with the ſacred firſt commandment of God, viz. *Thou ſhalt have no other gods but Me.* I inſiſted upon the word *Me* being a ſingular; and that it was plain and certain, that God ſpake of himſelf, as one ſingle perſon or being, and not three diſtinct perſons. And that it was manifeſt, that all the church of God, which then heard thoſe words, underſtood it in the ſame plain obvious ſenſe as I do; as is moſt evident from the words of the prophet *Moſes*: who ſaid to Iſrael thus; *Unto thee it was ſhewed, that thou mighteſt know, that the Lord he is God, there is none elſe beſides him; out of heaven he made thee hear his voice, &c.* I told them, that from the words *he*, and *him*, and *his*, it was certain God was but one ſingle perſon, one ſingle *he*, or *him*, or *his*. I told them that all the patriarchs from the beginning of the world did always addreſs themſelves to God, as one ſingle

being. O thou *Moſt High God, poſſeſſor of heaven and earth*; and *Abraham* ſaid to the king of *Sodom*, *I have lift up my hand unto the Lord, the Moſt High God, the poſſeſſor of heaven and earth, &c.* They knew nothing of a trinity, nor of God's being a plurality of perſons; that monſtrous doctrine was not then born, nor of two thouſand years after, 'till the apoſtacy and popery began to put up its filthy head.

Then I told them, that all the prophets witneſſed to the truth of the ſame pure uncorrupted unitarian doctrine *of one God, and no other but he: Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us?* Then I told them the words of God to *Abraham*, *I am God Almighty, walk before me, and be thou perfect*; and by the prophet *Iſaiah*, *To whom will ye liken me, or ſhall I be equal, ſaith the holy One*, not the holy Three. I told them that the words *Me* and *One* did utterly exclude any other perſon's being God, but that *One* ſingle *Me*; and that God himſelf often teſtifies the ſame truth, by ſaying, *Is there any God beſides Me?* And then tells us plainly, *There is no God, I know not any: I am the Lord, and there is none elſe; there is no God beſides me.* Iſaiah xlv. 5.

Now, ſaid I, let God be true, but every man a liar, that is, every man that contradicteth him; for he is the God of truth; he ſays, *I lift up my hand to heaven, I ſay, I live for ever.*

After

After I had pleaded many texts in the Old Teſtament, I began to enter the New; and told them, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the prophet, like unto *Moſes*, held forth the ſame doctrine that *Moſes* had done; for when a certain ruler came to aſk him which was the firſt and great commandment, (or how he expounded it,) he told him the ſame words that *Moſes* had ſaid. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord thy God is one Lord*, not three, *and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c.* And the ſcribe ſaid, *Thou haſt anſwered right, for there is but one God, and there is no other but he, &c.* Then I mentioned the words of Chriſt in the xviith of John and ver. 3. as very remarkable, and worthy of all their obſervation: *This is life eternal to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* And then I turned my face directly towards the prieſts (my proſecutors, who all ſtood on the right ſide of the judge) Now, ſaid I, ſince the lips of the bleſſed Jeſus, which always ſpake the truth, ſay his Father is the only true God; who is he, and who are they that dare ſet up another, in contradiction to my bleſſed Lord, who ſays, his Father is *the only true God?*

And I ſtopped here, to ſee if any of them would anſwer; but the power of God came over them, ſo that all their mouths were ſhut up, and not one of them ſpake a word. So that I turned about over my left ſhoulder, and warned the people, in the fear of

God, not to take their religious ſentiments from men, but from God: not from the pope, but from Chriſt; not from prelates nor prieſts, but from the prophets and apoſtles.

And then I turned towards the judge, and told him, that I was the more convinced of the truth of what I had ſaid from the words of my bleſſed Lord; who ſaid, *Call no man Father here upon earth; for one is your Father, even God. And call no man Maſter, for one is your Maſter, even Chriſt.* From hence, ſaid I, I deduce this natural inference, that in all things that are of a ſpiritual nature, we ought to take our religion from God and his prophets, from Chriſt and his apoſtles. It will be too long to mention all the texts and proofs that I made uſe of; I will only add one or two, as that of *Paul*, 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6. where the apoſtle tells us, *There is no other God but one; for though there be that are called gods (as there be gods many, and lords many) both in heaven and earth; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things*; ſo that I told them, here was a plain demonſtration; for he ſays, *there is but one God*: and he tells us who that one God is, that is, *the Father*. And therefore no other perſon could be God but the Father only; and what I had wrote in my book was the plain truth, and founded on God's own words, *Thou ſhalt have no other Gods but me.*

In

In ſhort, I could plainly perceive there was a general convincement through the court. The judge and juſtices of the peace did not like the proſecution; but ſaw plainly, that *out of envy the prieſts had done it.* I then began to ſet before them the odious nature of that hell-born principle of perſecution, and that it was hatched in hell; that it never came from Jeſus Chriſt; and that he and his followers were often perſecuted themſelves, but they never perſecuted any; that we had now a very flagrant inſtance of it by the papiſts at *Thorn*; where they firſt took away the ſchools where our brethren the proteſtants educated their children; then they took away the places of their religious worſhip; then they put them in priſons; then confiſcated their eſtates, and, laſt of all, took away their lives.

Now we can cry out loud enough againſt this, and ſhew the inhumanity, cruelty, and barbarity of it; but, ſaid I, if we, who call ourſelves proteſtants, ſhall be found acting in the ſame ſpirit, againſt others, the crime will be greater in us than in them; becauſe we have attained to greater degrees of light than they.

However, I told them, that I had put my houſe in order, and made up my accounts with all men as near as I could; and that as I owed no man here any thing, ſo I would not pay a penny towards this proſecution: and that I was ſure of it, that

that whatever fine they laid on me, or whatever hole or priſon, ſaid I, you thruſt me into, I ſhall find God's living preſence with me, as I feel it this day: and ſo ended my ſpeech.

Upon this a juſtice of the peace, one *Rupert Humpatch*, got up, went to the judge, laid his hand upon the judge's ſhoulder, and ſaid, my lord, I know this man to be an honeſt man; and what I ſay, I ſpeak not by hear-ſay, but experience; for I was his next-door neighbour three years. Alſo, another juſtice ſpake to the ſame effect. Then the judge ſpake to me; Mr. *Elwall*, I perceive you have ſtudied very deeply into this controverſy; but have you ever conſulted any of our reverend clergy and biſhops of the church of *England?* I anſwered, Yes, I have; and among others, the archbiſhop of *Canterbury* himſelf, with whom I have exchanged ten letters, viz. four I have had from him, and ſix he has had from me (at which words all the prieſts ſtared very earneſtly). Well, ſays the judge, and was not the archbiſhop able to give you ſome ſatisfaction in theſe points, Mr. *Elwall?* I ſaid, No; but rather quite the reverſe; for that in all the letters I ſent to the archbiſhop, I grounded my arguments upon the words of God and his prophets, Chriſt and his apoſtles; but in his anſwers to me, he referred me to acts of parliament, and declarations of ſtate, &c. whereas I told the biſhop, in one of my letters, that I wondered a man of

his

his natural and acquired abilities, ſhould be ſo weak as to turn me over to human authorities, in things of a divine nature; for though in all things that are of a temporal nature, and concern the civil ſociety, *I will be ſubject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake*; even from the king upon the throne down to the meaneſt officer in the land; but in things that are of a ſpiritual nature, and concern my faith, my worſhip of God, and future ſtate, I would *call no man father here upon earth*, nor regard either popes or councils, prelates or prieſts of any denomination, nor convocations, nor aſſemblies of divines, but obey God and his prophets, Chriſt and his apoſtles. Upon which the judge anſwered, Well, if his grace of *Canterbury* was not able to give you ſatisfaction, Mr. *Elwall*, I believe I ſhall not; and ſo ſat down and reſted him; for I think he had ſtood up for near an hour and a quarter.

Then he ſtood up again, and turning to the prieſts talked ſoftly to them. I did not hear what he ſaid, or what they ſaid to him; but I gueſſed from what the judge ſaid next; for, ſays he, Mr. *Elwall* you cannot but be ſenſible that what you have writ, being contrary to the commonly received doctrines of the church, it has given offence to ſome of your neighbours, and particularly to the clergy; are you willing to promiſe, before the face of the country here, that you will not write any

more

more on this head? I anſwered, God forbid that I ſhould make thee any ſuch promiſe; for when I wrote this book, I did it in the fear of God; and I did not write to pleaſe the church of *Rome*, nor the church of *England*, nor the church of *Scotland*; but to pleaſe that God who gave me my breath; and therefore, if at any time I find myſelf drawn forth to write in defence of this ſacred firſt commandment, or any other of the ten, I hope I ſhall do it in the ſame ſpirit of ſincerity as I have done this. And I perceived the judge was not in any wiſe diſpleaſed at my honeſt, plain, bold anſwer; but rather his heart ſeemed to be knit in love to me; and he ſoon declared me acquitted: and then the clerk of the arraigns, or aſſizes, ſtood up, and ſaid, Mr. *Elwall* you are acquitted; you may go out of court when you pleaſe.

So I went away through a very great croud of people (for it was thought there was a thouſand people at the trial) and having ſpoke long I was a-thirſt, ſo went to a well and drank. Then I went out of town by a river-ſide, and looking about, and ſeeing no one near, I kneeled down on the bank of the river, and ſent up my thank-offering to that good God who had delivered me out of their hands.

By the time that I returned to the town, the court was up and gone to dinner: a juſtice of peace, and another perſon met me, and would have me to

eat

eat and drink with them, which I did; and afterwards, as I was walking along the ſtreet ſome perſons hove up a great ſaſh-window and invited me up to them; and when I entered the room, I found ten or a dozen perſons, moſt of them juſtices of the peace; and amongſt them a prieſt, whom they called doctor. One of the juſtices took me by the hand, and ſaid, Mr. *Elwall*, I am heartily glad to ſee you, and I was glad to hear you bear your teſtimony ſo boldly as you did. Yes, ſays another juſtice, and I was glad to ſee Mr. *Elwall* come off with flying colours as he did: upon which the prieſt ſaid (in a very bitter manner) *He ought to have been hanged.* I turned unto him, and ſaid, Friend, I perceive *thou doſt not know what ſpirit thou art of; for the ſon of man came not to deſtroy, but to ſave:* but thou wouldeſt have me deſtroyed. Upon which one of the juſtices ſaid, How now, doctor, did not you hear one of the juſtices ſay, that he was an honeſt man, and that what he ſaid was not by hear-ſay, but by experience, and would you have honeſt men hanged, doctor? Is this good doctrine? So that the prieſt ſaid but little more for ſome time: So I took leave of the juſtices, and took horſe for *Wolverhampton*, for I knew there would be great joy in my family, for the common people all expected to hear of my being fined and impriſoned. But a farmer that lived near, who had been upon the jury at *Stafford*, got to

to town before me, and the people went all up and aſked him, What have they done to Mr. *Elwall?* Have they put him in priſon? He anſwered "No, he preached there an hour together, "and our parſons could ſay never a word. What "muſt they put him in priſon for? I told our "foreman of the jury, Mr. *Elwall* was an honeſt "man, and his father was an honeſt man, I knew "him very well." So they were all damped; but there was great joy in my family, and amongſt all my friends: Praiſes, living praiſes be attributed to that good God who delivered me out of their hands!

Chriſt never told us of that ſcandalous popiſh invention, of his human nature praying to his divine nature; but, like a true obedient ſon of God, ſubmitted to death, even that cruel death which the hatred and envy of perſecuting wicked prieſts inflicted on him, becauſe he had ſo plainly and truly told them all of their blindneſs, covetouſneſs, pride, and hypocriſy. And therefore *God raiſed him from the dead*; and for his faithfulneſs *God has exalted him to be a prince and a ſaviour* to all thoſe that obey that pure doctrine which God gave him to teach; *that denying ungodlineſs and ſinful luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly and righteouſly in this world. Then are we his diſciples indeed, when we do thoſe things that he hath commanded.* Then ſhall we be ſaved, not by the merits of *Chriſt*, that is another popiſh invention; for he never did any thing but what

what it was his duty to do, and therefore could not merit any thing for others; but he taught us the true way to find acceptance with God, and that was by *doing the will of his Father which is in heaven: and* therein *he is the way, the truth, and the life,* becauſe *no one cometh unto the Father, but by that way.*

Neither did he make ſatisfaction unto God for us. It was impoſſible; and what God never required: But *he who had no pleaſure in the death of ſinners, but rather that they ſhould turn from their wickedneſs and live,* out of the immeaſurable height and depth of his love, directed our lord *Jeſus Chriſt* to teach mankind a never-failing way of being reconciled to God; and that was by ſincere repentance and reformation. This was the goſpel or good tidings of *Jeſus Chriſt, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* He tells us, *I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*; and by that beautiful excellent parable of the prodigal ſon, he illuſtrates the tender mercy of his God and our God, of his Father and our Father, without any ſatisfaction. The compaſſionate Father required none at all, but humble confeſſion and ſubmiſſion, with ſincere repentance and reformation, and then comes *the beſt robe, the ring, the ſhoes, and the fatted calf,* to demonſtrate the paternal acceptance without ſatisfaction or ſacrifice, *but a broken and a contrite heart which he will never re-*

fuſe; for he can as ſoon ceaſe to be God, as ceaſe to be merciful.

And as to the trinitarians, nothing is more plain, than that they feed upon aſhes; *a deceived heart hath turned them aſide*, becauſe they will not make uſe of thoſe rational faculties which God hath given them; nor ſay, *Is there not a lye in my right-hand?* otherwiſe they would never flatter the humble *Jeſus*, nor make the moſt high God to be a plurality of perſons.

For as to the holy ghoſt (their third God) it is evidently no diſtinct perſon from God, any more than a man's ſpirit is a diſtinct perſon from the man; ſo that the ſpirit of God is God's ſpirit, as is manifeſt from ſcripture and reaſon, Gen. vi. 3. *My ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man: And the ſpirit of God moved upon the face of the waters: And God ſaid, Let there be light, and there was light. And God ſaid, Let there be a firmament in the midſt of the waters. And God made all things by the word of his power.* So that the word of God, and the ſpirit of God, are not diſtinct perſons from God, but the power of God, and the energy of God. So the word of a man, and the ſpirit of a man, are not diſtinct perſons from the man, but the man himſelf; if his word be falſe, or his ſpirit be wicked, the man is falſe and wicked.

The ſame degree of ſtupidity that leads trinitarians to call the word of God, and the ſpirit of God,

God, diſtinct perſons, would lead them to call the wiſdom of God, the goodneſs of God, the love of God, the peace of God, the power of God, and the mercy of God, diſtinct perſons; and make God to be a trinity of trinities; for it is certain, God is expreſsly called by all thoſe names.

But whoſoever goes about to father this abſurd and horrid doctrine of the trinity upon *Jeſus Chriſt*, does egregiouſly abuſe him; who told us plainly, *his Father was greater than he; and that he could do nothing of himſelf*, which is a demonſtration that he is not God: For we are ſure God is omnipotent, and can do all things of himſelf; being ſelf-exiſtent and independent, the ſupreme creator of the univerſe; and in this it is, that the unitarians triumph as unanſwerable, believing in *Jeſus Chriſt*, who told us his Father was *the only true God*, John xvii. 3.

P. S. By theſe laſt words of *Chriſt*, I myſelf was convinced many years ago.

A

FAMILIAR ILLUSTRATION

OF CERTAIN

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

RELATING TO

THE POWER OF MAN TO DO THE WILL OF GOD,
ORIGINAL SIN,
ELECTION AND REPROBATION,
THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, AND
ATONEMENT FOR SIN BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES. JOHN v. 39.

THE PREFACE.

MY CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

IN all theological controverſies our appeal lies to the *Bible*, which contains the writings of the inſpired prophets, and of the apoſtles and evangeliſts, who have recorded the precepts and doctrines of Chriſt. To thoſe who lived in the times in which theſe books were publiſhed, they were, no doubt, very intelligible; the language in which they are written, and the cuſtoms to which they allude, being perfectly known to them. But what was eaſy to *them*, a long courſe of time has rendered extremely difficult to *us*, who uſe a very different language, and whoſe manners and cuſtoms are ſo exceedingly unlike thoſe of the jews. On this account, it may puzzle the greateſt ſcholar of the preſent age to make out the ſenſe of a paſſage of ſcripture, which could not but have been perfectly underſtood by the moſt illiterate perſon in that age. In this ſtate of things, the *ignorant* and *unlearned* are very liable to *wreſt the ſcriptures*, as the apoſtle Peter ſays they ever have done, while good ſenſe and ſound learning often maintain a very unequal conteſt.

It

It is another unfavourable circumſtance with reſpect to the right underſtanding of the ſcriptures in this country, that the Engliſh tranſlation of them was made at a time when the chriſtian world was but juſt emerged from the darkneſs of popery, and while the belief of all thoſe opinions which are combated in the APPEAL was almoſt univerſally retained. Our tranſlators, therefore, having been educated in the belief of, and in a reverence for, thoſe particular opinions, and not having had their minds ſufficiently enlightened to call them in queſtion, it is no wonder that, without any ill deſign, they ſhould, in many places of their verſion, have expreſſed their own ſentiments, and not thoſe of the apoſtles. In all theſe caſes a juſt tranſlation is all that is neceſſary to remove the errors into which a wrong tranſlation has led us. But with reſpect to them, you, my brethren, who are not acquainted with the languages in which the ſcriptures were originally written, muſt neceſſarily depend upon other perſons for the interpretation of them. You may however be able, in a great meaſure, to judge for yourſelves concerning different tranſlations, by conſidering, if you will take pains to reflect upon the ſubject, which rendering of a doubtful paſſage is moſt agreeable to the general ſtrain of the ſcriptures, and to common ſenſe.

Do not, however, immediately conclude that an interpretation of a paſſage in ſcripture is *unnatural*, becauſe,

becauſe, when it is firſt propoſed to you, it may *ſeem* to be ſo; becauſe this may ariſe from nothing but your having been long accuſtomed to underſtand it in a different ſenſe, and from having imagined, though without ſufficient grounds, that the tenor of ſcripture favoured a contrary ſenſe. The roman-catholics, I doubt not, think it very unnatural to interpret the words of our Saviour, *This is my body*, in any other than in the moſt literal manner; and they think that our lord's ſaying upon another occaſion, *Unleſs ye eat the fleſh of the ſon of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*, abundantly confirms their interpretation.

Now, in this little treatiſe, I deſire no greater indulgence in the interpretation of ſcripture than all proteſtants think themſelves juſtified in taking, when they aſſert, that the meaning of theſe figurative expreſſions is, not that the *fleſh and blood*, but that the *doctrine* of Chriſt is to be received and digeſted, that is, to be improved and practiſed by us, in order to our final ſalvation. Since the very ſtrongeſt figures of ſpeech are manifeſtly uſed in almoſt all the books of ſcripture, it muſt be very unreaſonable to expect that the moſt literal interpretation ſhould always be the beſt.

I muſt farther apprize you, my brethren, that the paſſages which I have attempted to explain, being, for the moſt part, highly figurative, are, on that account, peculiarly difficult to underſtand; ſo

ſo that though I may not have hit upon the preciſe ſenſe of the writers, there may be no doubt, from other conſiderations, that the ſenſe which I am combating is not the true one, which is quite ſufficient for my purpoſe. It by no means follows that becauſe I am wrong, my adverſaries are right. In theſe caſes there is the greateſt room for criticiſm, and diverſity of opinion. I have given what at preſent appears to me to be the real ſenſe of every text of ſcripture which I have taken into conſideration, but I ſhall gladly avail myſelf of the new lights, which may be thrown upon any of them in future editions of this pamphlet.

In the mean time, with great diffidence of my own judgment, I recommend what I have now written to your moſt ſerious and candid conſideration; deſiring that you would read it with your bibles at hand, turning to every paſſage to which I refer, and reading what goes before and after it; becauſe I have no doubt but that, in this manner, you will ſee much more reaſon, if not to approve of my interpretations, yet to reject thoſe of my adverſaries, than I have ſuggeſted in this treatiſe, in which I have made a point of being as conciſe as I poſſibly could, conſiſtently with perſpicuity.

The rapid ſale of the *Appeal* makes me hope that, inconſiderable as the performance is, it has been the inſtrument of ſome good, in the hands of that Being who works by ſmall things as well as by great ones.

I. Of

I. Of the power of Man to do the will of God.

That the ſacred writers conſider all mankind as naturally poſſeſſed of ſufficient power to do what God requires of them, is evident from their earneſt remonſtrances and expoſtulations with perſons of all ranks and conditions, and their ſevere cenſure of them when they refuſe to comply with their exhortations. Nor was this the caſe with the *jews* and *chriſtians* only, who were favoured with divine revelation. The apoſtle Paul evidently conſiders the *gentiles* alſo in the ſame light; though, much not being given to them, much was not required of them.

In the firſt chapter of the epiſtle to the Romans this apoſtle repreſents the gentile world, in general, as having groſsly corrupted themſelves; yet, in that very repreſentation, he not only ſays, ver. 18, 19, that they had ſubjected themſelves to the *wrath of God, revealed from heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs; becauſe that which may be known of God is manifeſt, for God hath ſhewed it unto them*; but alſo ver. 32. that *knowing the judgment of God (that they who commit ſuch things are worthy of death) they not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.* So that the degeneracy and depravity into which they were ſunk were owing, not to want of *ability*, but to *wilfulneſs*, and a determined oppoſition

oppoſition to the powers of conſcience with which their Maker had endowed them, and which continued unceaſing remonſtrances within them. Reaſoning with the jews, in the 2d chapter, he gives the following repreſentation of ſome of the gentiles, ver. 14, 15. *For when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, theſe, having not the law, are a law to themſelves. Which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and their reaſonings between themſelves, accuſing or elſe defending* *: and he adds, in the 26 and 27 verſes. *Therefore, if the uncircumciſion*, i. e. the uncircumciſed gentile, *keep the righteouſneſs of the law, ſhall not his uncircumciſion be counted for circumciſion?* i. e. ſhall he not be equally accepted by God as a righteous jew? *and ſhall not uncircumciſion, which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumciſion, doſt tranſgreſs the law?* I preſume no one will think ſo meanly of St. Paul's reaſoning as to ſuppoſe, that he here puts a caſe which either never was true in *fact*, or poſſible in *nature*; but if this caſe either ever was true in fact, or *poſſible*, thoſe uncircumciſed gentiles, who ſhould anſwer his deſcription, muſt certainly have received from their Maker capacities and powers to do the will of God acceptably. And if others did not act in like manner, it was not owing to their not

* See Taylor.

not having received like natural powers, but to their not making a like improvement of them.

But let us attend to ſome paſſages which have been produced in proof that man is not, by nature, able to do the will of God, or that his maker has not given him capacity, and ability to know and do his will acceptably, without the ſuperadded operations of ſpecial grace to remedy his natural inability.

1 Cor. ii. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.*

Upon this text I would obſerve firſt, that the word, which is here tranſlated *natural*, properly ſignifies *animal*, or *ſenſual*. Thus 1 Cor. xv. 44, 46, the apoſtle uſes the ſame word three times for that body which dies, and is buried, to diſtinguiſh it from that *ſpiritual* body which ſhall riſe again; where the word *animal* much better expreſſes the apoſtle's meaning than *natural*. Again James uſes it, ch. iii. 15. where our tranſlators have rendered it *ſenſual*. *This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.* It is alſo uſed ver. 19. of Jude's epiſtle, and rendered *ſenſual*. *Theſe are they who ſeparate themſelves*, ſenſual, *having not the ſpirit.* Theſe are all the paſſages of the New Teſtament where I find this word uſed. And it appears, that where it denotes the character of perſons,

or the moral quality of things, our tranſlators have rendered it *ſenſual*. Conſequently, in conſiſtency with themſelves, they ſhould have rendered the text under conſideration, *But the ſenſual man* (who has no higher aims than the gratification of his animal ſenſes) *receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God*, &c. This would have been readily underſtood and acknowledged by all, and is perfectly conſonant to what he ſays to the Romans, viii. 7, *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God; for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

Secondly; in this chapter the apoſtle aſſures the Corinthians, that the doctrine which he had preached to them did not take its riſe from worldly wiſdom, or philoſophy, but was *that* only which had been revealed to the apoſtles by the ſpirit of God, v. 10. That he had preached this doctrine in thoſe terms only which the ſame ſpirit dictated, comparing the ſeveral particulars of it one with another, and with thoſe things which the ſame ſpirit had revealed to the patriarchs and prophets of old: That none of the wiſe or powerful men of this world had, or could poſſibly have diſcovered theſe counſels of God revealed by the ſpirit of God in the goſpel, which ſpirit the apoſtles have received, that they might know, and inſtruct others in the things that are freely given us of God. *But the ſenſual man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God*, revealed by it to the apoſtles, and preached by them to the

world,

world, *for they are fooliſhneſs to him,* contradicting all his former ſentiments and principles, to which he ſtill adheres; *neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned,* i. e. by the ſole inſtructions of the ſpirit, to which he neither attends nor ſubmits. *But the ſpiritual man diſcerneth or judgeth all things,* i. e. all the forementioned things of God revealed by his ſpirit; all goſpel-truths; *but he himſelf is diſcerned or judged of no man,* i. e. he is not ſubjected in theſe reſpects to the judicature of the powers of this world, to the principles of human ſcience, or the rules of human oratory.

Hence I would obſerve firſt, that the *deep things of God,* or the things of the ſpirit of God, which the apoſtle ſpeaks of in this chapter, are *the doctrines of the goſpel-revelation.* Now it is readily allowed, that as men were not endowed with any natural powers whereby they could diſcover theſe, they could not know them before they were revealed. But then, they were not under obligation to know or comply with them, 'till they were revealed. Secondly, that they who did not receive and comply with them, when revealed, are not repreſented as *incapable* through want of natural abilities and powers, but only as *diſqualified,* or under a *moral impotence,* through ſenſual diſpoſitions which they indulged, and habits which they had contracted.

By the *ſpiritual man* ſeems to be primarily meant here, the *apoſtles,* to whom the ſpirit of God revealed

the truths of the goſpel; but they alſo may be comprehended under the denomination, who receive the goſpel-truths, believing in the veracity, and ſubmiting to the authority of the ſpirit which revealed them.

John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* This ſingle clauſe of a long ſentence, being ſeparated from its connexion with what goes before it, is produced as a proof that man is not able to do the will of God acceptably, without the immediate aſſiſtance, or operation, of ſpecial grace upon him through Chriſt. But, if we look into our Lord's diſcourſe, we find him exhorting his diſciples to adhere ſteadfaſtly to him and his doctrine, *that they might bring forth much fruit.* He reminds them, that they had already gained much ſpiritual improvement by his inſtructions, v. 3. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have ſpoken unto you.* He intimates that, if they abandoned him and his doctrine, they would deprive themſelves of the means of fruitfulneſs. He is not ſpeaking then of the natural powers of man, but of the importance of the doctrines which he taught to render men fruitful in good works; but this ſeems neceſſarily to ſuppoſe a *capacity* in man to underſtand and improve his doctrines to theſe purpoſes.

It ſeems to be treating Chriſt and his words with great irreverence, to apply them to other purpoſes than thoſe for which he uſed them. We all readily agree that (in our Lord's ſenſe of the expreſſion) *without him we can do nothing.* i. e. If we abandon him

im and the goſpel, we cannot be fruitful in holineſs r good works; and are very thankful for the proiſion he hath made, and the aſſiſtances he hath afɔrded us by his word, *that we may bring forth much ruit.*

Philip. ii. 13. *For it is God who worketh in you oth to will and to do of his good pleaſure.*

In this paſſage the apoſtle exhorts the Philippians o *work out their own ſalvation with fear and trembling,* rom a grateful ſenſe of the goodneſs of God in granting them, for that purpoſe, the inſtructions and motives of the goſpel, by which ſuch convictions had already been awakened in them, as had excited them both to chooſe and perform what God required. The *energy,* or operation of God here ſpoken of, ſeems to be the energy of *inſtruction* and *perſuaſion.* No doubt it is a very reaſonable and powerful motive to us all to work out our ſalvation, that God, in unſpeakable love and good-will, is continually working in us, by the truths and motives of the goſpel, to chooſe and perform what he hath required of us.

1 Cor. xv. 10. *But by the grace of God I am what I am.*

Let any one carefully attend to the whole caſe of Paul's converſion, from being a perſecutor to become a preacher and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, and then ſay whether it is reaſonable to draw general concluſions reſpecting all men from ſuch a caſe. However we will all readily adopt his words, and ſay, *through*

the grace of God, and his favours freely beſtowed upon us by the goſpel, *we are what we are.*

Eph. ii. 8. *For by grace are ye ſaved through faith; and that not of yourſelves: it is the gift of God.*

The word *that* doth not refer to faith, as is evident from the original, but to the preceding clauſe of the ſentence. *That ye are ſaved by grace through faith,* this *is not of yourſelves: it is the gift of God.* He is the ſole author of this method of ſalvation.

Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. *Then will I ſprinkle clean water upon you, and ye ſhall be clean: from all your filthineſs, and from all your idols I will cleanſe you. A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you: and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your fleſh, and I will give you a heart of fleſh. And I will put my ſpirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my ſtatutes, and ye ſhall keep my judgments and do them.*

Look into the prophet himſelf, and I think it will appear, that this is a prediction of the reſtoration of the people of the jews to their own country at the end of the babyloniſh captivity, and that afterwards they ſhould no more return to the practice of *idolatry*, to which their fathers had been ſo prone. Now, the hiſtory of that people informs us that this prediction was verified in fact. When God promiſes to give them a new heart, and to put a new ſpirit within them, it relates to the particular ſubject ſpoken of, viz. idolatry: and, in reality, there was a wonderful change

change wrought in the diſpoſitions and practice of that people in this reſpect. This was effected by the deep impreſſions made upon them by the righteous judgments of God for the idolatries of their forefathers and of themſelves. But the *new heart and new ſpirit* muſt not be underſtood of an univerſal, or general change from evil to good, becauſe the whole ſubſequent hiſtory of the jews, and particularly in the goſpel-times, contradicts it. It may, however, refer to ſome greater change to be produced in the moral character of the jewiſh nation, on their return from their preſent diſperſion, produced by the conſideration of the hand of God in it, as the juſt puniſhment of their former vices. But it ſeems a ſtrange perverſion, to make this particular prediction to the returning captives, a general promiſe to mankind, at leaſt to chriſtians, of producing in them a thorough change of heart and life by the immediate operation of the ſpirit of God. This may be called *accommodating* ſcripture-paſſages, but it ſeems taking very bold liberties of making what we pleaſe out of them, very inconſiſtent with a ſincere belief in them, as containing the word of God.

Pſalm li. 10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right ſpirit within me.*

We ought not to interpret the figurative expreſſions of Hebrew poetry too literally, or to expect in it the rigid accuracy of expreſſion of our weſtern proſe. The pſalmiſt ſeems to mean no more by *create*, than *produce*, or *cauſe*; which does not exclude

clude the inſtrumentality of ordinary means, any more than the word *renew*. Nay, the pſalmiſt ſeems to expect that the clean heart muſt be *created* and the right ſpirit *renewed*, not by an immediate operation of ſovereign and almighty grace, but by the inſtrumentality of thoſe ordinary and uſual *means* of grace which he had long enjoyed, and experienced the good effects of; and therefore he adds in the following words, v. 11. *Caſt me not away from thy preſence*, i. e. deprive me not of the ordinances of thy worſhip in the tabernacle, where thou manifeſteſt thy preſence in a glorious manner, *and take not thy holy ſpirit from me*, i. e. that holy ſpirit with the illuminations of which he had, as a prophet, been ſo often favoured, and from which he had reaped great ſpiritual improvement.

Luke xxiii. 43. *To-day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.*

Although certain writers and teachers of religion profeſs not to mention the caſe of the penitent thief to encourage preſumption and careleſſneſs in any one, yet they mention it ſo often, and inſiſt on it ſo much, as an inſtance of a great and ſudden change taking place at the laſt hour of a poor ſinner's life, at the ſame time inſinuating that the ſame change may take place in others (*for the Lord's hand is not ſhortened, that it cannot ſave, neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear*) that I fear they do, in fact, unhappily encourage preſumption

and

and careleſſneſs in many. Let us therefore conſider this caſe with a little attention.

The abovementioned writers, &c. take for granted what is by no means certain, that the penitent thief's knowledge of Chriſt, and repentance of his own ſins, commenced only at the time of his crucifixion along with Jeſus. But is it not poſſible, that the crime for which he ſuffered might have been committed a long time before, though he had been apprehended for it only very lately; when, whatever change might in the mean time have been wrought in his character and converſation, the law muſt take its courſe, and he muſt ſuffer the puniſhment due to his miſdeeds, though he had repented of them very ſincerely, and become a new man? The evangeliſt has ſaid nothing that precludes this ſuppoſition, and therefore we are at liberty to make it, eſpecially if it will contribute to render the circumſtances of the narrative more conſiſtent and accountable. Let us ſee then what thoſe circumſtances are.

Firſt, obſerve that this penitent, in the reproof which he gave to his fellow-criminal, makes a candid and ingenuous confeſſion of his crimes, and the juſtice of his puniſhment, and *that* grounded upon a juſt and proper principle, *the fear of God. Doſt not thou fear God, ſeeing that thou alſo art in the ſame condemnation. And we indeed juſtly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds.* This ſeems much

much more like the language of one who had long reflected upon, been ſeriouſly affected with, and formed mature concluſions from the ſad ſubject, than of one who was but juſt now ſtruck with a conviction of his ſins, and a ſenſe of his miſerable ſtate.

Secondly, obſerve alſo the clear and confident declaration which he makes concerning Jeſus. *This man hath done nothing amiſs.* Can we ſuppoſe this declaration made by a man who had not known any thing of the perſon to whom he bears this teſtimony before this unhappy occaſion? Doth it not ſeem rather the atteſtation of one who had had conſiderable knowledge of the rectitude of his character and the unblameableneſs of his conduct?

There are, I readily acknowledge, many difficulties attending the hiſtory of the penitent thief, which I have no occaſion to conſider in this place, it being ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe to ſhew that the doctrine of the probability of repentance at the article of death proving acceptable will no longer have countenance from it.

John. vi. 44. 65. *No man can come to me except it were given him of my Father. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father cometh unto me.——No man can come to me, except the Father who hath ſent me draw him.* Now how is it that God is elſewhere ſaid to *draw* men, but by the force of motives and inſtructions, which ſuppoſe that men

men have a power of attending to them and improving by them. It is alſo to be obſerved that, in the whole of the diſcourſe, in which the words quoted above are introduced, Jeſus is blaming the jews for their infidelity; and it would be very extraordinary indeed, if for this purpoſe he ſhould make uſe of an argument, which would intirely exculpate them, intimating that it was not in their power to do otherwiſe.

Our Lord ſufficiently gives us to underſtand in what ſenſe he uſes the word *drawing* in the paſſage quoted above. He explains himſelf v. 45. *It is written in the prophets,* (Iſaiah liv. 13.) *And they ſhall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the father cometh unto me.* This was the way in which God the Father drew ſome of the jews to Chriſt at that time; viz. ſuch of them as, influenced by reverence, love and duty to him, heard attentively, and learned the truths which he had already taught them by Moſes and the prophets; but they who were of a different ſpirit and conduct, with reſpect to the divine truths already revealed, could not come to Chriſt, who conſtantly referred them to the teſtimonies of Moſes and the prophets in proof of his divine miſſion. To them *it was not given to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven,* Matt. xiii. 11. Agreeably hereto he ſays on another occaſion, *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or*

whether

whether I ſpeak of myſelf, John vii. 17. And he thus remonſtrates againſt the unbelieving jews, chap. v. 39. &c. *Search the ſcriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which teſtify of me.—But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you—How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that cometh from God only.* This appears plainly to be the language of one who conſidered the cauſe of the unbelief of theſe jews as ariſing, not from natural inability, or the with-holding of the grace of God, but from contracted evil principles and habits, to which they determinedly adhered; as he ſpeaks v. 40. *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.*

II. Of original sin.

That mankind are conſiderable *ſufferers* in conſequence of the fall of Adam, is not denied; but all the evils which Moſes ſpecifies as affecting his poſterity on that account, are of a corporeal and temporal nature, viz. *labour*, *ſorrow*, and *death*. It is poſſible, indeed, that the body being more ſubject to diſeaſe, the mind may be more feeble, and therefore more prone to comply with ſome temptations; but then it ſhould alſo be conſidered, that a ſickly conſtitution is favourable to many virtues, and we ſee that a ſtate of confirmed health is often highly dangerous in a moral reſpect; ſo that

upon

1 the whole it is probable that our condition is
: favourable to virtue than that of Adam. That
acred writers did not conſider it as, upon the
le, worſe than his, is evident from their never
ıg the leaſt hint, that any allowance will be
e to men for that natural diſadvantage. Nay
y of the ſinful poſterity of Adam are blamed
e ſeverely than he was for his ſin: and if we
ider his ſituation and the circumſtances of his
we cannot ſuppoſe that he had greater ſtrength
ind to reſiſt temptation that we are now poſ-
d of. Since, however, ſome particular texts
ılledged, to prove that the nature of man is to-
r depraved by the fall, inſomuch that all man-
l, without exception, are now altogether inca-
e of any good thought, word, or action; and,
eover, that we are all ſubject to the everlaſting
th of God on account of the ſin of Adam, I ſhall
: a brief explication of the principal of thoſe
s.

Gen. vi. 5. *And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of
was great in the earth; and that every imagina-
of the thoughts of his heart was only evil conti-
lly.* If we underſtand this paſſage literally, it
l be contradicted by the character which is im-
diately afterwards given of Noah, of whom it is
l, ver. 9, *that he was a juſt man, and perfect in his
eration, and that he walked with God.* But it is
in that this wickedneſs of mankind was not ow-

ing to any *natural depravity*, which their derivation from Adam rendered neceſſary, but that it was a *voluntary corruption*, and had its riſe from themſelves only; for it is ſaid, ver. 12. that *God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all fleſh had corrupted his way upon the earth.* Beſides, this ſtate of the world is alledged as a juſtification of the divine proceedings againſt them, whereas, if they had been corrupt by the *neceſſity of nature*, it muſt have operated as a plea in their favour, with that being who conſiders our frame, and remembers that we are but duſt. If he makes ſuitable allowance for the infirmities of our *bodies*, much more would he conſider the natural and neceſſary diſorders of our *minds*.

Job xiv. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* This is a proverbial expreſſion, ſignifying that nothing can be more perfect than its original; but Job is not ſpeaking in this place of the guilt and pollution of man, but of his ſorrows and mortality.

Pſalm li. 5. *Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.* This alſo has very much the air of a proverbial expreſſion, ſignifying great depravity of heart, and very early habits of vice. That it was not intended to expreſs a natural and invincible propenſity to vice, is plain, becauſe that would be inconſiſtent with the tenor of the whole pſalm, in which the humble author ſeems

diſpoſed

diſpoſed to aggravate, rather than to extenuate his offences, to which this laſt mentioned conſideration would have greatly contributed.

Rom. v. 12, 13, 14. *Wherefore, as by one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned, &c.*

I think a careful and impartial reader will obſerve, that the apoſtle ſpeaks not here of the death of children, whom he does not once mention, or refer to, through the whole argument. But he ſpeaks of thoſe who were not only *capable* of ſinning but had *actually* ſinned, and refers us to the Moſaic hiſtory of mankind in the ages between the fall of Adam and the giving of the law by Moſes. Sin and death entered into the world by Adam, and death hath paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned, conſequently muſt have tranſgreſſed ſome law, v. 14. *For, before the* giving of the *law* by Moſes, *ſin was in the world, but ſin is not imputed where there is no law*: and the law of Moſes they could not ſin againſt before it was given. *Nevertheleſs, death reigned from Adam to Moſes, even over them that had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion*, i.e. by eating the forbidden fruit, or violating any poſitive law of life given to them. What law then had they ſinned againſt? Moſt evidently, the law of righteouſneſs which God had written on their hearts; the ſanction of which they were alſo well apprized of (as the apoſtle ſpeaks of

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the gentiles in general, ch. i. 32, of this epiſtle) *Who knowing the judgment of God that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death, not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.* Hence it appears that the apoſtle does not ſpeak of the ſin of Adam being imputed to make men ſinners, and ſubject them to death; but of actual and perſonal ſins, and of death as the recompence of them. Now look into the Moſaic hiſtory of this period, and we find before the flood *that the wickedneſs of men was great in the earth.*——Gen. vi. 5. *The earth alſo was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. For all fleſh had corrupted his way upon the earth*, v. 11, 12. And after the flood, excepting the faith and obedience of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, we have little elſe recorded beſides trangreſſions of the law of righteouſneſs, ſins which men committed, though *not after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion.* As to the death of infants; God, the great giver of life, hath, undoubtedly a perfect right to reſume it, whenever it ſeemeth meet to his infinite wiſdom. But I do not recollect that the ſacred writers do any where repreſent it as a *puniſhment* either for Adam's ſin, or their own. In a few caſes they ſpeak of it as a puniſhment of the ſin of their immediate parents, but then, as a puniſhment to their parents, who had ſinned, not to the children who had not ſinned.

Rom.

Rom. v. 6, 8. *For when we were yet without ſtrength, in due time, Chriſt died for the ungodly. But God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners, Chriſt died for us.*

Let the intelligent reader judge for himſelf, whether the apoſtle does not ſpeak here of the ſtate of mankind (particularly of himſelf and the perſons he writes to) before Chriſt's death, and the conſequent publication of the goſpel to the world, and intimate that the caſe is very different ſince that happy event? Doth he not plainly make the diſtinction in both verſes, that we might not miſtake his meaning, *When we were yet without ſtrength*, and *while we were yet ſinners?* But doth the caſe continue the ſame, ſince Chriſt died, with thoſe to whom the bleſſings of the goſpel are imparted? then hath Chriſt died, and the goſpel been publiſhed in vain. Yet ſome writers repreſent the ſtate of thoſe for whom Chriſt died, and who have received the goſpel, as juſt the ſame, as to *ſtrength*, with them who had not received it, and who lived before it was publiſhed. Surely, any of us would be diſpleaſed to have our words wreſted to purpoſes ſo different from our intentions; eſpecially, when we had endeavoured to guard them from ſuch abuſe. God our maker hath given us intelligent capacities, ſuited to thoſe diſcoveries which he hath made of his will, whether by the light of nature, or revelation; he hath given us alſo freedom of choice and action for the conduct of

ourſelves; he hath granted us the light and motives of the goſpel for our fuller inſtruction and perſuaſion; he is ever preſent with us and ready to aſſiſt our ſincere endeavours to know and to do his will: ſurely then, it is *unjuſt* and *ungrateful* to him to ſay that we are ſtill *without ſtrength*; and if we be ſinners, it is wholly our own fault. As for the gentiles, even the worſt of them, the apoſtle no where aſcribes their want of ſtrength, to their not having received from their maker ſufficient abilities to know and do his will acceptably, but to their having voluntarily corrupted themſelves and one another, and thereby loſt the abilities which God had given them, and become *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.*

Rom. vii. 7, 8. *Becauſe the carnal mind is enmity againſt God; for it is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the fleſh cannot pleaſe God.*

It appears to me that the apoſtle ſpeaks here only of perſonal character and conduct, and the effects of them in producing governing habits: but not at all of any corruption or depravity of the *nature* of man effected by Adam's ſin, whereby he is become *incapable* of doing that which is good, or of pleaſing God. Adam, or his ſin, is not mentioned by the apoſtle in treating of this ſubject. It is readily acknowledged, that a perſon who attaches himſelf to the gratification of his *carnal* or ſenſual appetites and paſſions cannot perform the will of God, but

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muſt daily become more and more alienated from *him* and from his duty: but this is ſaying no more than that a wicked man cannot be a good man, or pleaſe God ſo long as he continues wicked. But it by no means follows that this man is unable to hear, underſtand, and receive ſalutary convictions from the truths of God, revealed by his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and thereby become changed in his ſentiments, diſpoſitions, and conduct, and from *carnally-minded* become *ſpiritually-minded.* The various forms of ſpeech which the apoſtle uſes in the preceding and following verſes ſeem only to expreſs one and the ſame thing, viz. the change produced in the diſpoſitions and conduct of men by preaching the goſpel to them, and their attention to it, and ſincere reception of it, together with the happy effects and conſequences of it.

Epheſians ii. 3. *And were by nature children of wrath even as others.*

If we compare the paſſages in which the apoſtle uſes the word *nature*, we ſhall find that he did not mean by it that internal frame, conſtitution, or condition of being wherewith God our maker hath formed us; but that external condition, or thoſe outward circumſtances (eſpecially with relation to God and religious concerns) in which divine providence hath cauſed us to be born and live. Human nature, in our ſenſe of the phraſe, is the ſame in all mankind; but different perſons may be brought

brought forth into life, and ſpend it under very different natural circumſtances, in the apoſtle's ſenſe of the word *nature*. Thus Rom. ii. 14. He ſays, *when the gentiles, which have not the law, do* by nature *the things contained in the law*, and v. 27. *Shall not uncircumciſion, which is* by nature, *if it fulfill the law, judge thee, &c.* He here plainly ſpeaks not of an internal frame, conſtitution, or powers, or what we call a *nature*, which the gentiles had, different from that of the jews; but of their external, moral, and religious ſtate and circumſtances, as deſtitute of the inſtructions and aſſiſtances of the law of Moſes, by which they were much below the jews. Again, in the remonſtrance which he tells us he made to Peter, we find theſe words, Gal. ii. 15. *We who are jews by nature, and not ſinners of the gentiles*; when certainly he doth not mean to intimate that the jews had a different ſort of nature, or internal conſtitution, whereby they were jews; but only we who are natural-born jews, and have all along enjoyed the privileges of that people. So likewiſe in the text under conſideration, having ſpoken of the Epheſians, as formerly *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, wherein, in time paſt, ye walked, according to the courſe of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience*; he adds, v. 3. *among whom alſo we all had our converſation in times paſt, in the luſt of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires of the*

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fleſh and of the mind. Obſerve, hitherto he ſpeaks of external condition and circumſtances, and of perſonal character and actual vices, and not at all of internal conſtitution, or a nature corrupted by the effects of Adam's ſin. He adds: *and were by nature children of wrath, even as others.* i. e. (conformable to his uſe of the word *nature* in other places) in conſequence of our birth and ſituation among children of diſobedience, where we were kept ignorant of the truth, deceived by falſe principles, and miſled by bad examples, we ourſelves were *children of wrath*, as others about us were, and many ſtill continue. By *children of wrath* I apprehend the apoſtle does not mean here *objects of the wrath and diſpleaſure of God*, but only deſcribes further the perſonal character of thoſe whom he ſo denominates. As in the cloſe of the former verſe he had mentioned *children, or ſons of diſobedience*, i. e. diſobedient children, (and Peter, 1 Ep. i. 14. ſpeaks of *obedient children*, in the original it is *children of obedience*) ſo here he mentions *children of wrath*, i. e. wrathful, furious, malignant, and miſchievous perſons. In a ſtriking and beautiful figure, he repreſents diſobedience and wrath under the perſons of two fruitful mothers, whoſe offſpring they had been. Accordingly, when the apoſtle comes in the beginning of the fourth chapter to exhort the Epheſian chriſtians to a converſation conformable to *the vocation wherewith they were called*, and quite

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the reverſe of the deſcription he gives in this verſe of their former character and conduct, he begins with deſcribing it thus, v. 2, 3. *With all lowlineſs and meekneſs, with long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace.* He alſo concludes the chapter thus; *Let all bitterneſs and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-ſpeaking, be put away from you with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Chriſt hath forgiven you.* Do we not ſee a greater propriety and force in theſe exhortations, when we conſider them as addreſſed to perſons who had formerly been *children of wrath?*

III. Of Election and Reprobation.

Rom. ix. 11, &c. *For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpoſe of God according to election might ſtand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was ſaid unto her, The elder ſhall ſerve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated. What ſhall we ſay then, is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid; for he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy, &c.*

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Theſe verſes, and the whole of this chapter, relate not to the election of particular perſons to eternal life, but to the calling of the gentiles, and the rejection of the jews from the privileges of the goſpel; and it is manifeſt that the apoſtle is not ſpeaking in this place of the *final ſtate*, or indeed of the *perſons* of Eſau and Jacob, but of their poſterity, and that only with a view to temporal privileges and prerogatives.

The whole body of chriſtians, conſiſting of jews and gentiles, are frequently ſtiled the *choſen*, and *elect of God*, on account of their external privileges, as the whole jewiſh nation had been ſo named before, on the ſame account. This is an eaſy and plain ſenſe of *election*, reflects not at all on the perfections of God, is conſiſtent with the offers and exhortations of ſcripture, and preſerves a harmony between the language of the old and new teſtament.

It muſt be acknowledged, however, that in order to vindicate the divine conduct in the calling of the gentiles, the apoſtle alledges ſome facts, in which not whole nations, but *particular perſons* are ſpoken of, and which ſeem to imply, that their minds were under ſupernatural influence in forming *bad* as well as *good* reſolutions; and there are other paſſages of ſcripture which at firſt ſight ſeem to look the ſame way.

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The hardneſs of Pharaoh's heart, Exod. ix. 16. Rom. ix. 17. the obſtinacy of Sihon king of Heſhbon, Deut. ii. 30. and the unbelief of many of the jews, If. vi. 10. Mat. xiii. 14. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 8. are all aſcribed to the purpoſe, act, or decree of God, who had important deſigns to anſwer by means of theſe blameable determinations of men. On the other hand, when perſons believe and obey the goſpel, it is aſcribed to the divine influence upon their minds.

Mat. xi. 25. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes. Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight*, John vi. 27. *All that the Father giveth me ſhall come to me.* See alſo John 17. Acts xvi. 14. *And the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that ſhe attended to the things that were ſpoken of Paul.* Moreover, every thing of this nature is expreſsly referred to the arbitrary diſpoſition of God, in Rom. ix. 18, 23. *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt ſay, then, unto me, Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath reſiſted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou, that thou replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay unto him that formed it, why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel unto honour,*

nour, and another unto diſhonour? What if God, willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, hath endured with much long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, which he had before prepared unto glory.

To underſtand ſuch paſſages as theſe, we ſhould conſider, that in the language of the ſcriptures God is ſaid to *do* thoſe things, which come to paſs according to the natural courſe of things, as well as to perform things of a miraculous nature; becauſe they take place in conſequence of the laws which he has originally eſtabliſhed. And, certainly, if God had not made men liable to be ſeduced by temptation, they would not have ſinned, any more than they could embrace truth without the means of becoming acquainted with it; and it muſt depend upon the good-pleaſure of God whether he will afford men more, or fewer advantages for attaining to knowledge, virtue, and happineſs. But, notwithſtanding this, if the means have been ſuch as would have been effectual, provided there had been no criminal prejudice to fruſtrate them, men are blamed, and God is juſt and wiſe in puniſhing them, as well as in rewarding thoſe whoſe minds are ſo diſpoſed, as to receive advantage from the means of virtue and knowledge which are afforded them.

Now that in this ſenſe the ſacred writers conſidered God as juſt to all mankind, is evident from the many earneſt exhortations and expoſtulations addreſſed to ſinners in the books of ſcripture, and from the blame and reproach which men are repreſented as incurring, when they continue in vice and ignorance. It is not poſſible that any perſons could be ſo inconſiſtent with themſelves, as to exhort ſinners to repent, and to blame and reproach them for not repenting, if they did not conſider them as having a natural power to comply with the exhortation. Nay, in this very paſſage of the apoſtle Paul, which is, perhaps, the moſt favourable to the doctrine of *abſolute decrees* of any thing in all the books of ſcripture, God is repreſented as *enduring, with much long-ſuffering, the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction*, which evidently implies that they had ſufficient power and time to repent, and to prevent their impending deſtruction; and therefore proves that their deſtruction was not *decreed*, but in caſe of their impenitence.

How much ſoever, therefore, the ſacred writers refer to God, upon particular occaſions, and whatever uſe they may ſuppoſe that his infinite wiſdom will make of the errors and vices of ſome individuals of mankind, in order to promote the intereſts of truth and virtue more at large, we cannot but conclude, that they conſidered every man's own determination as final with reſpect to his future ſtate;

and

and it is to be obſerved that neither the obſtinacy of Pharaoh, nor even the infidelity of the jews, had any neceſſary connection with their ſtate after death. The former might be hard-hearted with reſpect to the hebrews, and either rewarded for other virtues, or puniſhed for other vices, in a future ſtate; and if the unbelieving jews were in other reſpects ſuch men as Paul, who had a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge, they may find mercy in the day of judgment. There is not a ſingle paſſage in the ſcriptures which repreſents the future miſery of any individual of mankind as determined by an arbitrary decree of God; but a thouſand paſſages in which it is expreſsly ſaid, that the future ſtate of all mankind depends entirely upon their own voluntary actions.

After theſe obſervations, ſhort remarks on another paſſage may ſuffice for the purpoſe of this ſection.

Rom. viii. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpoſe. For whom he did foreknow, he did alſo predeſtinate, to be conformed to the image of his ſon, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified; and whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.*

All that we can fairly infer from this paſſage is, that the end of the chriſtian diſpenſation, or of the calling of mankind to the faith of the goſpel, is their

ſanctification and future glory; for it is manifeſt that *all* who are *called* are not *juſtified.* If this term *called* be reſtricted in its meaning, let it be reſtricted by St. Paul himſelf, viz. to thoſe *who love God*; which is ſufficiently repreſented as depending upon men themſelves, by being the ſubjects of precept and exhortation. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart,* &c.

IV. Of the divinity of Christ.

Nothing can be more evident, from the whole tenor of the new Teſtament, than that the perſon who is diſtinguiſhed by the name of the *Father* is the only true God, excluſive of the *Son*, or any other being whatever. Nevertheleſs, there are ſome ſingle and unconnected paſſages, eſpecially in our tranſlation of the bible, which ſeem to favour the contrary opinion, namely, that of the divinity of Chriſt. The intimate union which ſubſiſted between God and Chriſt, the powers communicated to him by God, eſpecially after his reſurrection and aſcenſion, and the diſtinguiſhed honours conferred upon him, eaſily lead us to the genuine ſenſe of the moſt conſiderable of theſe expreſſions, and make it evident that nothing was meant by them in the leaſt derogatory from the ſole proper divinity, and abſolute ſupremacy of the Father.

I. Chriſt being appointed the *king* and *judge* of men has powers given him adapted to thoſe offices, eſpecially

eſpecially a knowledge of the human heart, and the prerogative of declaring the forgiveneſs of ſin, which always accompanies regal authority; but being aſſiſted by divine wiſdom and diſcernment, as well as by divine power, in the exerciſe of this high office, it is, in effect, the ſame thing as the judgment and mercy of God diſplayed by the inſtrumentality of Jeſus Chriſt. We ought not, therefore, to be ſurprized at ſuch expreſſions as theſe. Mat. ix. 4. *And Jeſus knowing their thoughts.* John ii. 35. *He knew what was in man.* Mat. ix. 2. *Thy ſins are forgiven thee.* The multitude, who ſaw Chriſt exerting a miraculous power upon this occaſion, and heard him expreſs himſelf in this manner, had no idea of his claiming any extraordinary power, as *naturally inherent in himſelf*; for it is ſaid, ver. 8. *that when the multitude ſaw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, who had given ſuch power unto men.* The ſcribes and phariſees, indeed, ſaid within themſelves, upon this occaſion, ver. 3. *This man blaſphemeth.* But the jews called it *blaſphemy* to pretend to be the Chriſt; for when the high-prieſt ſolemnly adjured our Lord by the living God, Mat. xxvi. 63. that he would tell him *whether he was the Chriſt, the ſon of God*, and our Lord expreſsly replied that he was the Chriſt, we read, ver. 65. *then the high prieſt rent his clothes, ſaying, he hath ſpoken blaſphemy.*

Col. ii. 9. *In him dwelleth all the fullneſs of the godhead bodily.* This is a very proper expreſſion, being ſtrictly and literally true, though Chriſt himſelf was a mere man, ſince the wiſdom and power of the one true God, the Father, were manifeſt in, and acted by him, agreeably to his own declarations, that *the words which he ſpake were not his own, but the father's who ſent him, and that the father within him did the works.* Nay, this very expreſſion, that the fullneſs of the godhead *dwelled* or *reſided* in him, ſeems to imply that it did not naturally belong to him. Beſides phraſes ſimilar to this are applied by way of figure to chriſtians in general. They are ſaid to be *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet i. 4. *to be filled with all the fullneſs of God*, Eph. iii. 19. and to *be the fullneſs of him, that filleth all in all*, Eph. i. 13.

Theſe obſervations will eaſily help us to underſtand what is meant by Chriſt being called the *image of the inviſible God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 15. and *the expreſs image of his perſon*, Heb. i. 3. and alſo his being *in the form of God*, Philip. ii. 6. for they all allude to the divine power and wiſdom which were diſplayed in him when he was on earth, but more eſpecially now that he is aſcended into heaven; at the ſame time, Chriſt being called only the *image* of God, is a ſufficient intimation that he is not *God himſelf.* Indeed, if this expreſſion was to be allowed to be any proof of the divinity of Chriſt,

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it would follow that Adam was God; for it is ſaid, Gen. i. 26. 27. *That God made man in his own image, and after his likeneſs.*

It is with as little appearance of reaſon that Chriſt is argued to be very and eternal God, becauſe he is ſtiled the *Son of God*; for all chriſtians have the ſame appellation, 1 John iii. 2. *Now are we the ſons of God.* We are alſo called not only the *children* but alſo the *heirs of God*, and *joint-heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. viii. 17. Adam is more eſpecially called the *ſon of God*, Luke iii. 18. and Ephraim is called *his dear ſon*, Jer. xxxi. 20.

John x. 30. *I and my father are one.* xiv 10. *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* That is, we are one in deſign and intereſt. But whatever be the union between the Father and the Son; it is of ſuch a kind, that his diſciples are capable of it with reſpect to them both; for, in Chriſt's prayer for his diſciples, he ſays, John xvii. 20. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo who ſhall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us:——and the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me.*

John

John v. 23. *That all men ſhould honour the ſon, even as they honour the Father*; that is, *as well as* the Father. The ſame word is uſed, where it can have no other ſenſe, in John xvii. 23. *And haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me*; that is, not in the ſame degree, but in like manner as. To explain the ſenſe of the entire paſſage in which the words abovementioned occur, let it be obſerved, that the jews had perſecuted Jeſus, becauſe he had made a man whole on the ſabbath-day. By way of apology, he ſays, v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto*, that is, in the courſe of his providence on the ſabbath, as well as on other days, and I work; that is on the ſabbath-day alſo. Upon this the phariſees were more enraged, *becauſe he called God his father, and becauſe he made himſelf* (not *equal with God*, as we render it) but *like unto God*, aſſuming ſo much of his prerogative, as to claim the privilege of working on the ſabbath-day as well as God. However, to ſhew them that he meant nothing arrogant in what he had ſaid, and that this privilege was given to him by God, he immediately replies, v. 19. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, the Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſees the Father do; for what things ſoever he doth, theſe alſo doth the ſon likewiſe.* He then proceeds to repreſent all his extraordinary power as the gift of his Father, v. 20. *For the Father loveth the ſon, and ſheweth him all things that he himſelf doth; and he will ſhew him greater things than*

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theſe, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even ſo the ſon quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the ſon, that all men ſhould honour the ſon, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the ſon, honoureth not the Father who hath ſent him. Indeed, this very laſt clauſe ſufficiently ſhews that the honour to which Chriſt is intitled is not on account of what he is, or has *of himſelf*, but on account of what he derives from God, as his ambaſſador.

II. Very high titles are juſtly given to Chriſt as the founder of the chriſtian religion, and eſpecially as ſuperintending the affairs of his church, and as controuling whatever can affect the intereſt of his church. Thus the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews ſtiles him *the author and finiſher of our faith.* Heb. xii. 2. He is alſo ſaid to be the *head over all things to his church*, Eph. i. 2. Theſe high titles are attributed to Jeſus with reſpect to the ſtate of glory, and univerſal dominion, to which he is exalted by the Father.

The author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews makes uſe of a phraſe of the ſame import with this of the apoſtle John, where he only means to expreſs the unchangeableneſs of the doctrine of Chriſt, as the connection of it, with what goes before and after, makes very evident. Heb. xiii. 7. *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto*

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you the word of God, whoſe faith follow, conſidering the end of their converſation, Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever. Be not carried away with diverſe and ſtrange doctrines. The whole is intended to inculcate a ſtedfaſt adherence to the genuine doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt.

It is plain, from many paſſages in the book of Revelation, that the author of it conſidered Chriſt as a perſon ſubordinate to the Father, and the miniſter of his will, and therefore no ſingle expreſſion ſhould be interpreted in ſuch a manner as to make it imply the contrary. The very firſt words of the book ſufficiently expreſs this. *The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him.* ver. 6. *Who has made us kings and prieſts unto God, and* (or rather, *even*) *his Father*, ii. 26. *And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations—even as I received of my Father*, iii. 14. *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he ſhall go no more out, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jeruſalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God*, ver. 21. *To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſitten down with my Father in his throne.* Farther, this writer, evidently ſpeaking of Chriſt in his higheſt capacity, uſes the following expreſſions, ver. 14. *Theſe things ſaith the amen,*

amen, the faithful and true witneſs, the beginning (or the moſt excellent) *of the creation of God*; which plainly implies that, how excellent ſoever he may be, he is but a creature.

Matt. xxviii. 29. *And lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world.* Chriſt, who is conſtituted *head over all things* to his church, undoubtedly takes care of its intereſts, and attends to whatever concerns his diſciples; and *being with* a perſon, and *taking care* of him are, in the language of ſcripture, equivalent expreſſions. See Gen. xxi. 20. 22. xxviii. 15. xxxix. 2. Beſides, Chriſt, having a near relation to this earth, may even be *perſonally preſent* with his diſciples when they little think of it. But it is by no means neceſſary that he be perſonally preſent every where at the ſame time; ſince God may communicate to him a power of knowing diſtant events, of which he appeared to be poſſeſſed when Lazarus was ſick. This is certainly no greater a power than God may communicate to any of his creatures.

Another paſſage which ſeems to ſuppoſe the omnipreſence of Chriſt is, Mat. xviii. 23. *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them*; but if we conſider the whole of this paſſage, in which our Lord is ſpeaking of the great power of which his apoſtles would be poſſeſſed, and eſpecially of the efficacy of their prayers, we ſhall be ſatisfied, that he could only mean by this form of expreſſion to repreſent their power with God,

God, when they were aſſembled as his diſciples, and prayed ſo as became his diſciples, to be the ſame as his own power with God; and God heard him always. That our Lord could not intend to ſpeak of himſelf as *the God who heareth prayer*, is evident from his ſpeaking of the Father, in this very place, as the perſon who was to grant their petitions, ver. 19. *Again I ſay unto you, that if two of you ſhall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they ſhall aſk, it ſhall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven.*

III. Conſidering the great power with which Chriſt was inveſted on earth, and more eſpecially the authority to which he is exalted now that he is in heaven, it is certainly right that a very high degree of reſpect ſhould be paid to him; and from the manner in which this is expreſſed, and eſpecially becauſe the word *worſhip* is made uſe of on thoſe occaſions in our Engliſh tranſlation, ſome perſons have been confirmed in their opinion, that he is the proper object of ſupreme or divine worſhip, and is therefore truly and properly God; but any perſon, who will conſider the real import of the following paſſages, muſt ſee that they afford no foundation for ſuch a concluſion.

Heb. i. 6. *When God bringeth in the firſt-begotten into the world, he ſaith, Let all the angels of God worſhip him.* Alſo the leper, Mat. viii. 2, the ruler, Mat. ix. 18, the woman of Canaan, Mat. xv. 25, the poor people in the ſhip, Mat. xiv. 33, and his diſciples, Mat. xxviii. 9 - - - - 17, are all ſaid

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to have *worſhipped* him. But the very circumſtances in which this worſhip was paid to Chriſt ſufficiently prove that *divine worſhip* was not intended; becauſe it is well known that the jews had no expectation of any other perſon than a man for their Meſſiah; and when Nicodemus was convinced of the miraculous power of Jeſus, he concluded, not that he was *God*, but that he muſt have been *impowered by God*; for he ſays, John iii. 2. *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do theſe miracles that thou doeſt, except God be with him.* Beſides, it is well known that the Greek word, which, in the above-mentioned paſſages, is rendered *worſhip*, is frequently uſed to expreſs a very high degree of reſpect; but ſuch as may be lawfully paid to men of a proper character and rank. And indeed our word *worſhip*, though it is now appropriated to that worſhip which is due to God only, was formerly uſed with greater latitude, and even in our tranſlation of the bible; as when a ſervant, in one of our Saviour's parables, is ſaid to have fallen down and *worſhipped* his maſter, ſaying, *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all*: where certainly divine worſhip could not be meant. It is alſo an evidence of this uſe of the word, that in our marriage-ſervice the man is directed to ſay to the woman, *With my body I thee worſhip*; and the terms *worſhip*, and *worſhipful*, are ſtill applied to ſeveral of our magiſtrates, and bodies of men.

Alſo, in the Greek tranſlation of the Old Teſtament, the ſame word that we render worſhip in the New is frequently uſed where ſupreme worſhip could not be intended. Otherwiſe Abraham muſt be ſuppoſed to have intended to pay ſupreme worſhip to the angels, when he took them to be men; and to the ſons of Heth, when he was making a bargain with them for a piece of ground to bury his dead.

IV. Arguments have been brought to prove the divinity of Chriſt from the *names* and *titles*, which are given to him, as well as from the *powers* aſcribed to him, and the *worſhip* that is paid to him; but if we conſider the proper meaning of other *ſcripture-names*, and the occaſions on which they were conferred, we muſt be ſatisfied, that very little ſtreſs is to be laid on ſuch an argument as this.

Iſaiah vii. 14. *Behold a virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Emanuel*, Mat. i. 23. *Behold a virgin ſhall be with child, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Emanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us.* Theſe texts have been thought to imply that Chriſt is a compound-being, or that he is *God incarnate*; but if we conſider other inſtances of names impoſed by the divine direction in the ſcriptures, we ſhall find that they do not always expreſs any thing characteriſtic of the perſon on whom they are impoſed, but that they were intended to be a memorial of ſome divine promiſe or aſſurance, reſpecting things of a public and general

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concern. Thus the prophet Iſaiah, vii. 1, &c. was directed to call his ſon *Shear-Jaſhub*, which ſignifies *a remnant ſhall return*, to expreſs to the jews, that only a ſmall number of their enemies ſhould return from the invaſion with which they then threatened them, or that a number of their own people who had been carried captive ſhould return. Another child he was directed to call *Maher-ſhalal-haſh-baz*, on a ſimilar account; and of Jeruſalem it is ſaid, *This is the name wherewith ſhe ſhall be called, the Lord our righteouſneſs*, to expreſs that God would appear in that character to his people. In like manner the divine being, admitting that he appointed Chriſt to be called *Emanuel*, might do it to engage to manifeſt his own preſence with his people, by protecting and bleſſing them, and inflicting vengeance on their enemies and oppreſſors. For this prediction was given upon the occaſion of an invaſion by the Iſraelites and Syrians.

Iſaiah ix. 6. *Unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder; and his name ſhall be called wonderful, counſeller, the mighty God, the everlaſting father, the prince of peace.* In this, as in the former caſe, theſe titles may not expreſs what *Chriſt is*, but what God will manifeſt himſelf to be in him, and by him; ſo that, in the diſpenſation of the goſpel, God, the wiſe and benevolent author of it, will appear to be a wonderful counſellor, the everlaſting father, and the prince of

peace. If this name be ſuppoſed to characterize Chriſt himſelf, it will by no means favour the common doctrine of the trinity; becauſe it will make him to be the *Father*, or the firſt perſon, and not the *ſon*, or the ſecond perſon. Beſides, whatever powers or dignities are to be poſſeſſed by Chriſt, it is ſufficiently intimated in this place, that he does not hold them *independent*, and *underived*; ſince he himſelf, and all the bleſſings that he beſtows, are ſaid to be *given*, that is, by God; and at the concluſion of the propheſy, in the next verſe, it is ſaid, that the *zeal of the Lord of hoſts will perform this*. I would alſo obſerve that that part of the title on which the greateſt ſtreſs has been laid may be rendered *the mighty God my father for ever*, or *the mighty God is my father for ever*, which is exactly agreeable to many declarations of the ſcripture concerning Chriſt, and his uſual title of *the ſon of God*; and to this the angel, in his ſalutation of Mary, might probably allude, when he ſaid Luke i. 32. *He ſhall be great and ſhall be called the ſon of the higheſt*; and it is very obſervable, that what he adds correſponds moſt remarkably with the remainder of this very propheſy of Iſaiah. The prophet ſays, ver. 7. *Of the increaſe of his government, and peace, there ſhall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to eſtabliſh it, with judgment and with juſtice, from henceforth even for ever.* The angel ſays, *He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the*

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ſon of the higheſt, and the Lord God ſhall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end.

V. Many of the texts, which are uſually alledged in proof of the divinity of Chriſt, relate to God the Father only. One of the moſt remarkable of theſe is John i. *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The ſame was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light ſhineth in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehended it not. There was a man ſent from God, whoſe name was John. The ſame came for a witneſs, to bear witneſs of the light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, but was ſent to bear witneſs of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. And the word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Theſe words, interpreted in the moſt literal manner, only imply that *the word*, or Chriſt, had a being before the creation of the world; that he had the title of *God*, or of a *God*, and was the in-

ſtrument by whom the ſupreme God made all things; but they by no means imply that he was true and very God; for magiſtrates and others are ſometimes called gods, on account of their power and dominion, in which they reſemble God. Nay the derivation of Chriſt from the Father, and conſequently his dependence upon him, is ſufficiently expreſſed by his being called, in the laſt of theſe verſes, *the only-begotten of the Father.*

To me, however, it appears, that the apoſtle does not ſpeak of the pre-exiſtence of Chriſt in this place; but only of the power and wiſdom of God, which dwelled, or tabernacled in his fleſh; and that he probably meant to condemn ſome falſe opinions concerning the *logos* (which is the Greek for *word*) which are known to have prevailed in his time. Now, in contradiction to them, the apoſtle here aſſerts, that by the *word of God*, we are not to underſtand any being diſtinct from God, but only the *power* or *energy of God*, which is ſo much *with God*, that it properly belongs to his nature, and is not at all diſtinct from God himſelf; and that the ſame power which produced all things was manifeſt to men in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, who was ſent to enlighten the world; that though his power made the world, it was not acknowledged by the world, when it was revealed in this manner, not even by God's peculiar people, the jews; and notwithſtanding this power was manifeſted in a more

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ſenſible and conſtant manner than ever it had been before, dwelling in human fleſh, and tabernacling, or abiding, ſome conſiderable time among us; ſo that his glory was beheld, or made viſible to mortal eyes, and was full of grace and truth.

Rom. ix 5. *Whoſe are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came, who is over all God bleſſed for ever.* This may with equal propriety and truth be rendered, *God, who is over all, be bleſſed for ever*, the former ſentence ending with the word *came*; and ſince no ancient manuſcripts are pointed, all the pointings have been made, and the different ſentences have been diſtinguiſhed, as fallible men have thought the beſt ſenſe required. It affords an argument favourable to my conſtruction of theſe words, that it is uſual with the apoſtle Paul to break out into a doxology, or form of thankſgiving to God, after mentioning any remarkable inſtance of his goodneſs. See Eph. iii. 21. 1 Tim. i. 17. vi. 16. See alſo 1 Pet. iv. 11. Indeed, it is very common in jewiſh writings to add a doxology after barely mentioning the name of God.

1 John v. 20. *And we know that the ſon of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his ſon Jeſus Chriſt. This is the true God, and eternal life.* This laſt clauſe is manifeſtly explanatory of the title *him that is true*, or *the true*

one,

one, in the preceding clauſes, of whom the Son of God has given us an underſtanding, or with whom he has made us acquainted. As the word *even* is a mere addition of our tranſlators, inſtead of *we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, we may read, we are in him that is true, *in* or *by* his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and this makes a far more conſiſtent ſenſe, and may be conſide red as an alluſion to the words of Chriſt addreſſed to the Father, and recorded by this very apoſtle, John xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* Without this interpretation, theſe two texts would flatly contradict one another; for how can the Father be *the only true God*, if the ſon be true God alſo?

1 Cor. i. 23, 24. *But we preach Chriſt crucified, unto the jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them that are called, both jews and greeks, Chriſt the power of God and the wiſdom of God.* The meaning of this plainly is, that the power and wiſdom of God were diſplayed in this very circumſtance of the crucifixion of Chriſt, which was ſuch a ſtumbling-block, and appeared ſo fooliſh to men: agreeably to what he immediately adds, *for the fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than men, and the weakneſs of God is ſtronger than men.* That which the jews and greeks had rejected, as fooliſh and weak, was, in reality, and

appeared

appeared to thoſe who were *called*, and who were taught to underſtand it better, to ſurpaſs the wiſdom and power of man.

Tit. ii. 13. *Looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.* In this place God and Chriſt are mentioned as diſtinct perſons, the judgment of the world being ſometimes aſcribed to the one, and ſometimes to the other; which is eaſily accounted for by conſidering that, in that great day, Chriſt acts by commiſſion from God, and will come in the glory of his Father, and of the holy angels, as well as in his own glory, upon that moſt ſolemn occaſion.

John xx. 28. *Thomas anſwered, and ſaid unto him, my Lord, and my God.* This is an abrupt exclamation, and no connected ſentence at all, and ſeems to have proceeded from a conviction, ſuddenly produced in the apoſtle's mind, that he who ſtood before him was, indeed, his Lord and maſter raiſed to life by the power of God. The reſurrection of Chriſt and the power of God had ſo near a connection, that a conviction of the one could not but be attended with an acknowledgment of the other; and therefore they are frequently mentioned together, the one as the *cauſe*, and the other as the *effect*. Rom. i. 4. *Declared to be the ſon of God with power, by the reſurrection from the dead.* Rom. vi. 4. *Raiſed from the dead by the glory of the Father.* x. 9. *If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth*

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the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe with thine heart, that God has raiſed him from the dead, thou ſhalt be ſaved. Here we plainly ſee, that he only who raiſed Chriſt from the dead is ſtiled *God*, and not Chriſt, who was raiſed by his power.

1 Tim. vi. 13, &c. *I give thee charge in the ſight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jeſus Chriſt, who before Pontius Pilate witneſſed a good confeſſion, that thou keep this commandment without ſpot unrebukable, untill the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which, in his times, he ſhall ſhew, who is the bleſſed and only potentate, the king of kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee: to whom be honour and power everlaſting, amen.* The meaning of this paſſage, as the conſtruction of the words in the original inconteſtibly proves, is as follows; *which appearing*, or ſecond coming of Chriſt to judge the world, he who is the bleſſed and only potentate, that is, the only true God, the Father, ſhall ſhew, or declare. And this exactly agrees with what our Lord himſelf ſays, that the day and hour of this his appearing was not known either to the angels of God, or to himſelf, but to the Father only; and conſequently he only could ſhew, or declare it. Beſides, the very verſes I quoted above ſufficiently demonſtrate, that the writer of them conſidered God and Chriſt as diſtinct perſons. *I*

charge

charge thee in the ſight of God and before Jeſus Chriſt; and how could he with truth ſay of Chriſt, that *no man had ſeen him or could ſee him?*

Heb. i. 10. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth, &c.* As there are ſeveral expreſſions in the firſt part of this chapter which are not eaſy to be underſtood, I ſhall give a brief explanation of them all, in their order. The great objection which the jews made to chriſtianity being the meanneſs of Chriſt's appearance, and the ignominious death that he ſuffered; to obviate this, the author of this epiſtle begins with repreſenting the great dignity to which, for the ſuffering of death, Chriſt is now exalted at the right-hand of God. Having ſaid that *God, in theſe laſt days, had ſpoken to us by his Son*, he immediately adds, ver. 2. *whom he hath appointed heir*, or Lord, *of all things*; *by whom alſo he made* or appointed, not the material *worlds*, but *the ages*; that is, the preſent diſpenſation of God's government over mankind, which is eſtabliſhed by the goſpel, the adminiſtration of which is committed to the Son: *Who being the brightneſs of his* (that is, God's) *glory, and the expreſs image of his* (that is, God's) *perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his* (that is, God's) *power*, &c. *ſat down on the right-hand of the majeſty on high.* It is plain from this paſſage, that whatever Chriſt is, he is

by

by divine appointment; *whom he* APPOINTED *heir of all things.*

Afterwards this writer proceeds to prove that Chriſt is ſuperior to angels, and at the cloſe of this argument he has theſe words, *but concerning the ſon he ſays, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*; or, as it may be rendered, *God is thy throne for ever and ever*; that is, God will eſtabliſh the authority of Chriſt, 'till time ſhall be no more. *A ſceptre of righteouſneſs is the ſceptre of thy kingdom. Thou haſt loved righteouſneſs and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladneſs above thy fellows.* From this paſſage nothing can be more plain, than that, whatever authority belongs to Chriſt, he has a ſuperior, from whom he derives it; *God, even thy God, has anointed thee.* This could never have been ſaid of the one true God, whoſe being and power are underived.

In verſes 10, 11, 12. the apoſtle quotes an addreſs to God, as the great creator and everlaſting ruler of the univerſe, but without any hint of its being applied to Chriſt, from Pſalm cii. 25.—27. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They ſhall periſh, but thou remaineſt; and they all ſhall wax old as doth a garment, and as a veſture ſhalt thou fold them up, and they ſhall be changed: but thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.* This quotation was probably made with a view to expreſs the great honour conferred on

Chriſt,

Chriſt, on account of the dignity of the perſon who conferred it. For it immediately follows, ver. 13. *But to which of the angels ſaid he*, that is, the great being to whom this deſcription belongs, *Sit thou on my right-hand until I make thine enemies thy foot-ſtool.* Or, ſince this quotation from the pſalmiſt deſcribes a perpetuity of empire in God, it may be intended to intimate a perpetuity of empire in Chriſt, who holds his authority from God, and who muſt hold it, unleſs God himſelf be unable to ſupport it.

Acts xx. 28. *Feed the church of God, which he has purchaſed with his own blood.* In the moſt ancient manuſcripts this text is, *Feed the church of the Lord*; which generally ſignifies Chriſt. Alſo in ſome copies it is, *which he purchaſed with blood*; that is, the blood of his ſon. As the *blood of God* is a phraſe which occurs no where elſe in the ſcriptures, we ought to be exceedingly cautious how we admit ſuch an expreſſion. If Chriſt was God, his blood could not be his blood as God, but as man.

VI. I ſhall here introduce a few texts, which are not reduceable to any of the above-mentioned heads, being either interpolations, or miſ-tranſlations of the ſcriptures, or having no relation to the ſubject, in favour of which they have been quoted.

Mat. xxviii. 19. *Go ye, therefore, and teach nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, a of the ſon, and of the holy ghoſt.* This form baptiſm ſeems to be intended to remind chriſtia of the different parts which God, and Chri and the holy ſpirit, acted in the ſcheme of man redemption; God ſending his ſon on this gracio errand; the ſon faithfully performing the wo which God gave him to do, and being made he over all things to the church; and the holy ſpi confirming the word of truth by miraculous gif But it is quite an arbitrary ſuppoſition, th becauſe they are mentioned together upon t occaſion, they muſt be equal in all other reſpe partaking of divinity alike, ſo as to be equal power and glory. The apoſtle Paul ſays, 1 C x. 2. that *the children of Iſrael were baptized u Moſes:* but he certainly did not mean that Mo was their God.

Col. iii. 10. *And have put on the new man, wh is renewed in knowledge after the image of him t created him: where there is neither greek nor jew, c cumciſion nor uncircumciſion; Barbarian, Scythi bond, nor free, but Chriſt is all, and in all;* t is, there is no other diſtinction to be made no but only whether a man be a real chriſtian.

1 Cor. i. 2. *With all that in all places call u the name of Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord, both theirs and ou*

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That adoration, ſuch as is due to the one living and true God, was not meant by the apoſtle in this place, is evident from the very next words; *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; where Chriſt is evidently ſpoken of as diſtinct from God. It is probable, therefore, that the apoſtle meant nothing more than ſuch as call themſelves by the name of Chriſt, or who profeſſed chriſtianity.

Act vii. 59. *And they ſtoned Stephen, calling upon God, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit.* The word *God* is not in the original, as our tranſlators have ſignified, by their directing it to be printed in the italic character, ſo that this text by no means implies that Stephen acknowledged Chriſt to be God, but only informs us, that Stephen addreſſed himſelf to Chriſt, whom he had juſt ſeen in perſon, in a ſtate of great exaltation and glory; as we read, ver. 55, 56. *He, being full of the Holy Ghoſt, looked ſtedfaſtly into heaven, and ſaw the glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding on the right-hand of God; and ſaid, Behold, I ſee the heavens opened, and the ſon of man ſtanding on the right-hand of God.* This very language clearly implies, that he conſidered the *ſon of man*, and *God*, as diſtinct perſons.

The word, which is here and in 1 Cor. i. 2. rendered to *call upon*, is far from being appropriated to *invocation*, as peculiar to the divine Being. It is the ſame word that is rendered to *appeal to*, as when

Paul appeals to Cæſar; and is uſed when a perſon is ſaid to be called by any particular name; as, Judas, *called* Iſcariot, &c. There can be no doubt, therefore, but that it has the ſame meaning both in 1 Cor. i. 2, and alſo in Acts ix. 21. *Is not this he that deſtroyed them who called on this name in Jeruſalem?* that is, all who called themſelves *chriſtians*. It is ſo rendered, James i. 7. *Do they not blaſpheme the worthy Name by which ye are called?* or, as it is more exactly rendered, *which is called*, or impoſed, *upon you?* that is, by which ye are diſtinguiſhed. Had it implied *adoration*, it would at leaſt have been *which is called upon by you.*

1 John v. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt; and theſe three are one.* Sir Iſaac Newton, and others, have clearly proved that this verſe was no part of John's original epiſtle, but was inſerted in later ages. It is not to be found in any ancient manuſcript, and has been omitted in many printed copies and tranſlations of the new Teſtament, at a time when the doctrine which it is ſuppoſed to contain was in a manner univerſally received. I ſay *ſuppoſed to contain*, becauſe, in fact it expreſſes no more than that theſe three agree in giving the ſame teſtimony, which is the only kind of union which the *ſpirit*, the *water*, and *the blood*, in the verſe following can have.

1 Tim.

1 Tim. iii. 16. *And without controverſy, great is the myſtery of godlineſs: God was manifeſt in the fleſh, juſtified in the ſpirit, ſeen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.* Sir Iſaac Newton has fully demonſtrated that, in the original, this text was not *God* manifeſt in the fleſh, but *who* was manifeſt in the fleſh, and a very ſmall alteration in the manner of writing greek is ſufficient for that purpoſe. The oldeſt manuſcript in the world, which I have examined myſelf, has been manifeſtly altered from the one to the other, as appears by the difference in the colour of the ink. Beſides, it is even literally true, that God was manifeſt in the fleſh of Chriſt; ſince he himſelf acknowledges, that *the very words which he ſpake were not his own, but the Father's who ſent him,* and that *the Father, who was in him, did the works.* It was therefore with the greateſt propriety that our Lord ſaid, John viii. 19, *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father alſo,* the wiſdom and power of God being conſpicuous in him. They who will have this text to be a proof of the godhead of Chriſt, muſt ſuppoſe him to be the *Father*, or the firſt perſon in the trinity, and not the *Son*, or the ſecond.

Zach. xiii. 7. *Awake, O ſword, againſt my ſhepherd and againſt the man that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* So ſays our engliſh verſion, but the word in the original ſignifies a perſon that is *near*, or *joined*

in neighbourhood to another, and, except this ſingle text, it is every where rendered *neighbour* by our tranſlators.

Philip. ii. 5. &c. *Let this mind be in you which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus, who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himſelf of no reputation;—Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him.——That every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* The proper rendering of this text is, *Who being in the form of God, did not think that being equal to God*, or a ſtate of equality with God, *was a thing to be ſeized* (i. e. by him) *but made himſelf of no reputation.* This makes the whole paſſage perfectly juſt and coherent, as a recommendation of humility; and alſo hints a fine contraſt between the conduct of Chriſt, whom St. Paul elſewhere calls the *ſecond Adam*, and the firſt, who is alſo ſaid to have been made *in the likeneſs of God*, but aſpiring to be *as God* fell, and was puniſhed; whereas Chriſt, who had more of the likeneſs or *form of God*, on account of his extraordinary powers, not graſping at any thing higher, but humbling himſelf, was exalted. It is in this ſenſe, or a ſenſe ſimilar to it, in which this very text is quoted by thoſe fathers of the chriſtian church who wrote before the controverſy about the divinity of Chriſt was ſtarted. In this manner, even ſome who maintain the divinity of Chriſt render the words. Thus, Father Simon,

Simon, who contends that being in the form of God is equivalent to being truly God, renders the latter part of the verſe, *did not imperiouſly aſſume to himſelf an equality with God.* Indeed the word, *but*, which introduces the next verſe, evidently leads us to expect ſome contraſt between what goes before and after it, which is very ſtriking in the manner in which I tranſlate this text; but it is altogether loſt in our common verſion. *For he made himſelf equal to God, but humbled himſelf*, is not even ſenſe. Laſtly, I would obſerve that the word, which is here rendered *equal to*, is alſo uſed to expreſs a very high degree of reſemblance, which it is very certain that Chriſt was poſſeſſed of with reſpect to God; and Dr. Doddridge renders it, *to be as God.*

VII. Chriſt may be ſuppoſed to have *pre-exiſted*, or to have had a being before he was born of the virgin Mary, without ſuppoſing him to be the eternal God; but it appears to me that the apoſtles conſidered Chriſt as being, with reſpect to his *nature*, truly and properly *a man*, conſiſting of the ſame conſtituent parts, and of the ſame rank with ourſelves, *in all things like unto his brethren*; and the texts which are thought to ſpeak of him as having exiſted before he came into this world, appear to me to bear other interpretations very well. Some of them have been explained in a different ſenſe already,

ready, and I ſhall now endeavour to explain the reſt.

John viii. 56, &c. *Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day, and he ſaw it, and was glad. Then ſaid the jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and haſt thou ſeen Abraham? Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, before Abraham was I am.* The meaning of this paſſage clearly is that Abraham *foreſaw* the day of Chriſt, and that Chriſt was the ſubject of prophecy before the times of Abraham. This ſaying of our Lord is alſo illuſtrated by what the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews ſays concerning all the ancient worthies, viz. that *they all died in faith, not having received the promiſes, but having ſeen them afar off.* In this manner, therefore, Abraham alſo *ſaw* the day of Chriſt. Agreeably to this it is eaſy to explain John xvii. 5. *Glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*, of the glory which was intended for him in the councils of God before all time. Nay this muſt neceſſarily be our Lord's meaning in this place; ſince in many other paſſages the power and glory which were conferred upon Chriſt are expreſly ſaid to be the reward of his obedience, and to be ſubſequent to his reſurrection from the dead. It is with peculiar propriety, therefore, that this requeſt of our Lord follows his declaration, that he had done the work for which he was to receive the reward; ver. 4. *I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt*

gaveſt me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thou me, &c. As the connection of this prayer ſhews that whatever it was that our Lord requeſted, it depended upon the part which he had to act in the world, it is plain that it could not be any thing which he had enjoyed antecedently to his coming into it.

In the ſame manner we may explain the following prophecy of Micah concerning Chriſt, v. 2. *Thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thouſands of Judah, yet out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me that is to be a ruler in Iſrael, whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting.* For this may be underſtood concerning the promiſes of God, in which the coming of Chriſt was ſignified to mankind from the beginning of the world. The Chaldee paraphraſe renders it, *whoſe name was foretold of old.*

As to thoſe who think that our Lord meant to intimate that he was truly and properly God becauſe he uſes that expreſſion *I am*, by which the true God announced himſelf to Moſes, they will perhaps be ſenſible how little ſtreſs is to be laid upon it, when they are informed, that, though the ſame phraſe occurs very often in the hiſtory of Chriſt, our tranſlators themſelves, in every place excepting this, render it by *I am he*, that is, I am the Chriſt. It is uſed in this ſenſe in the 24th verſe of this chapter, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins.* And again in the 28th verſe, *When ye ſhall lift up the ſon*

of

of man, then ſhall ye know that I am he. That the words *I am* in this place do not mean the eternal God, is manifeſt from the words which are immediately connected with theſe; *then ſhall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myſelf, but as the Father hath taught me, I ſpeak theſe things.*

John xvi. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.* In order to underſtand this text, it ſhould be obſerved, that by *the world* is not always meant *the material world*, and leaſt of all in the diſcourſes of our Saviour; but the world conſidered as *a ſtate of trial, exerciſe and diſcipline*, and eſpecially the unbelieving and ungodly part of the world. *The world ſhall hate you*, John xv. 10. *I pray not for the world*, xvii. 9, &c. Our Saviour alſo ſpeaks of ſending his diſciples into the world; though, conſidered as a part of the material ſyſtem, they had been in it long before. John xvii. 18. *As thou haſt ſent me into the world, even ſo alſo ſend I them into the world.* Since, therefore, the miſſion of Chriſt, and that of the apoſtles, are ſpoken of in the very ſame words, and repreſented as commencing in the ſame manner, there can be no more reaſon to ſuppoſe that Chriſt had a being before he came int the world, than there is to ſuppoſe that the apoſtles had preexiſted. Alſo when our Lord ſays, John xvii. 11. *Now I am no more in the world*, he could not mean the material world: for, after his reſurrection, he was-

was ſeen by many, and even after his aſcenſion he was ſeen by Paul, if not by Stephen; and he is probably in this world at preſent, attending to the affairs of his church; and therefore may even be literally *with his diſciples*, upon important occaſions, *even to the end of the world*; and the notion of a *local heaven*, above the clouds, is altogether fanciful.

John iii. 13. *No man hath aſcended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the ſon of man, who is in heaven.* This language is evidently figurative; but if Chriſt could be in heaven at the ſame time that he was on earth, converſing with Nicodemus, it is plain that his being ſaid to have come down from heaven cannot neceſſarily imply that he had ever been any where but on the earth. In fact, the phraſes *being in heaven, being with God*, or *in the boſom of God*, &c. expreſs a ſtate of very intimate communication with God, ſuch as qualified Chriſt to ſpeak of heavenly things, as he expreſſes himſelf to Nicodemus, and to make his Father known to us. John i. 8. *No man hath ſeen God at any time: the only-begotten ſon, which is in the boſom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

The omnipreſence, and conſequently the proper divinity of Chriſt, could not be meant by his being ſaid to be in heaven at the ſame time that he was viſible on earth, becauſe he is, on this occaſion, called *the ſon of man*, which is always allowed to denote

denote his *humanity*, and which certainly could not be preſent in two places at the ſame time.

John vi. 51. *I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world. Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, except ye eat the fleſh of the ſon of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* By theſe and other expreſſions of a ſimilar nature, our Lord ſtaggered not only thoſe who followed him for the ſake of the *loaves* with which he had fed them, but even many of his other diſciples; and perceiving this, he ſays unto them, ver. 61. *Doth this offend you, what and if ye ſhall ſee the ſon of man aſcend up where he was before? It is the ſpirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing. The words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life.* In this our Lord ſeems to be reproving the ſtupidity of his diſciples, in not underſtanding that by *himſelf*, and *his fleſh and blood*, he meant his *doctrine*, which came down from heaven. For if it was his *body* that was to be of ſuch benefit to mankind, what would they ſay if they ſhould ſee it taken from them, aſcending into heaven, from whence he had ſpoken of its deſcending to be the life of the world? They muſt then be ſatisfied that his *fleſh* could profit them nothing, and therefore muſt conclude that his *doctrine* muſt have been the *ſpirit, and the life*, of which he ſpake. Or we may, perhaps, underſtand

underſtand our Saviour, in this place, as referring to his aſcenſion, which was an ocular proof of his having had that intimate communication with God, and having been ſent of God concerning which he had been ſpeaking. Beſides, if this paſſage be interpreted literally, it will imply that the *body* of Chriſt came from heaven, which is not pretended.

Col. i. 15. *Who is the image of the inviſible God, the firſt-born of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt: and he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firſt-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell.*

In this paſſage we have a view given us of the great dignity and dominion to which Chriſt is exalted by his Father, and of the great and happy change that was made in this world by his goſpel; for by *creation* we are to underſtand *the new creation*, or *renovation*, in which ſenſe the ſame word is uſed by the apoſtle, when he ſays, *We are his workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works.* Eph. ii. 10. So great a change is produced in the world, in the tempers and conduct of men by the goſpel, that both the terms *creation* and *regeneration* are made

uſe of to expreſs it. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot ſee the kingdom of God*, John iii. 3. ſo that by *regeneration*, or *new creation*, we are to underſtand a *new-modeling*, or *new-conſtituting*. We ſhall ſee leſs harſhneſs in this figure, when we conſider, that what is called the *Moſaic creation* was probably ſimilar to this; ſince, for any thing we know, it was only the *re-making* or *re-conſtituting* of the world, out of a former chaos.

There are ſeveral paſſages in which the words, which we generally render to *create*, or *creation*, ſignify only a *renewal* or *reſtoration*. Eph. ii. 10. *To make in himſelf, of twain, one new man, ſo making peace.* 2 Cor. v. 17. *If any man be in Chriſt he is a new creature.* In 1 Pet. ii. 13. the ſame word is rendered *ordinance*. *Be ye ſubject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake.* The places in which the influence of the goſpel is termed a new creation are illuſtrated by the following propheſy of Iſaiah, in which it is deſcribed in the ſame language, Iſ. lxv. 17, &c. *Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former ſhall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jeruſalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.*

The word *all* muſt neceſſarily reſpect the ſubject concerning which the affirmation is made, and be limited by it. Thus when *all the world* is ſaid to be taxed, Luke ii. 1. it is plain that nothing but the *Roman*

Roman empire could be underſtood. In like manner, when *all things* are ſaid to be created by Chriſt, or for him, and alſo when *all things* are ſaid to be *ſubject to him*, or *put under his feet*, nothing can be meant but ſuch things as can properly come under his government as the Meſſiah, and be ſubſervient to him in the conduct of it, including probably the *viſible* powers and kingdoms of this world, and the *inviſible* adminiſtration of angels; and therefore the apoſtle, with great propriety, concludes and ſums up the whole of Chriſt's authority, by ſaying that *he is the head of the body the church.*

Before often ſignifies before in point of *rank*, and *pre-eminence*, and not in point of *time*; ſo that when Chriſt is ſaid to be *before all things*, the meaning is, that he is the *chief*, or *moſt excellent* of all. And when it is ſaid that *in him all things conſiſt*, we are to underſtand that in him all things are *completed*, and compacted; ſince the chriſtian diſpenſation is the laſt, and moſt perfect of all, compleating one great and regular ſcheme of revelation, continually advancing from the more imperfect to the more perfect. I would further obſerve that the things here ſaid to be created by Chriſt are not *material things*, as the *heaven* and the *earth*, but things *in* heaven and earth, as *thrones*, *principalities*, &c. and therefore are naturally interpreted, of that *power* and *dignity* to which he is advanced, and

which is denoted by God's giving him *all power in heaven and on earth*, after his reſurrection.

We ſhall have a clearer underſtanding of this paſſage in the epiſtle to the Coloſſians, if we compare it with a parallel paſſage in the epiſtle of the ſame apoſtle to the Epheſians, i. 17, &c. *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of glory, may give you the ſpirit of wiſdom, that ye may know—— the exceeding greatneſs of his power,——which he wrought in Chriſt Jeſus when he raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right-hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullneſs of him that filleth all in all.* In this paſſage we ſee moſt clearly that all the power and authority to which Chriſt is advanced is ſubſequent to his reſurrection.

The origin and extent of the power of Chriſt are alſo moſt diſtinctly expreſſed, Phil. ii. 8. - - - - 11. *He humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs; wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue*

tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

To the ſame purpoſe alſo, 1 Pet. i. 20, 21. *Who (Chriſt) verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifeſt in theſe laſt times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raiſed him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.* I ſhould think it hardly poſſible to read this ſingle paſſage with attention, and not ſee that the writer of it conſidered Chriſt as a being diſtinct from God, and ſubordinate to him; that all his glory was ſubſequent to his reſurrection; and alſo, that, though he was *fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*, he was not *manifeſted*, or brought into being, 'till *theſe laſt times*, or thoſe of the goſpel.

There are ſome other paſſages in the New Teſtament, which are ſimilar to thoſe which I have quoted above, and may ſerve to illuſtrate them, John xvi. 15. *All things that the Father hath are mine*, xvii. 10. *All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.* 1 Cor. viii. 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

That there is nothing, in any of the paſſages which I have now quoted, that implies any proper divinity in Chriſt, is ſufficiently evident, even without the addition of ſuch expreſſions as directly

aſſert the contrary; as when the apoſtle Paul
that *to us there is one God, even the Father*; and
Saviour calls his Father *the only true God*. To ſig
that the authority of Chriſt is not underived,
that of God; and at the ſame time to inform
from whence it does proceed, the apoſtle ſays,
it pleaſed the Father, that in him ſhould all fu
dwell. In the very ſame language our Saviour ſp
of his diſciples, *Fear not, little flock, it is the Fa*
good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.

V. Of the Doctrine of Atonement

The death of Chriſt being an event of
greateſt conſequence to the end of his coming
the world, and being, at the ſame time, the
ſtumbling-block both to the jews and the gen
who could not eaſily reconcile themſelves t
notion of a *ſuffering ſaviour*, it is no wonde
the writers of the New Teſtament ſpeak mu
it, and repreſent it in a great variety of lights,
eſpecially ſuch as would appear the moſt favou
to the chriſtian converts. In this caſe we
rally expect bold compariſons and alluſions,
cially conſidering how much more figurative
ſtyle of the books of ſcripture, and indeed
oriental writings, than ours. But in wha
lights the ſacred writers repreſent the dea

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Chriſt, there is reſemblance enough ſufficiently to juſtify the repreſentation, at the ſame time that this event being compared to *ſo many things*, and things of ſuch *different natures*, proves that the reſemblance in all of them is only in *certain reſpects*, and that they differ conſiderably in others.

For example, the death of Chriſt is compared to a *ſacrifice* in general, becauſe he gave up his life in the cauſe of virtue and of God, and more eſpecially a *ſacrifice for ſin*, becauſe his death and reſurrection were neceſſary to the confirmation of that goſpel, by which ſinners are brought to repentance, and thereby reconciled to God. It is called a *curſe*, becauſe he died in a ſtate of ſuſpenſion, which was by the jews appropriated to thoſe perſons who were conſidered as reprobated by God; and it is called a *paſſover*, becauſe it may be conſidered as a ſign of our deliverance from the power of ſin, as the paſſover among the jews was a ſign of their deliverance from the egyptian bondage. It is alſo called a *ranſom*, becauſe we are delivered by the goſpel from ſin and miſery. On the ſame account, he is ſaid by his death *to bear, or take away, our ſins*, ſince his goſpel delivers us from the power of ſin, and conſequently from the puniſhment due to it.

Theſe are all bold, but ſignificant figures of ſpeech, the death of Chriſt really correſponding to them all to a certain degree, but they differ ſo very widely

widely from one another, that no one thing can correſpond to any of them throughout; for then it muſt exclude all, or at leaſt moſt of the reſt. The ſame thing, for inſtance, could not be a curſe, and a ſacrifice; becauſe every thing accurſed was conſidered as an abomination in the ſight of God, and could never be brought to the altar; and the killing of the paſchal lamb was a thing eſſentially different from a ſacrifice for ſin.

Theſe obſervations appear to me to be a ſufficient guide to the interpretation of all the language of the New Teſtament reſpecting the death of Chriſt, without ſuppoſing that it had any proper influence upon God, ſo as to render him propitious to his offending creatures, or that it made it conſiſtent with the divine juſtice to forgive the ſins of mankind; which is contrary to a thouſand plain and expreſs declarations of ſcripture, which repreſent God as being eſſentially, and of himſelf, merciful and gracious, without the leaſt reference to any other being or agent whatever, and as forgiving *freely*, and gratuitouſly, upon our repentance and amendment, without any other atonement or ſatisfaction. I ſhall therefore content myſelf with reciting a few of the paſſages in which the death of Chriſt is repreſented in theſe ſeveral lights.

Eph. v. 2. *Chriſt alſo has loved us, and given himſelf for us, an offering and a ſacrifice to God, of a*

ſweet

ſweet-ſmelling ſavour, Heb. vii. 27. *Who needed not daily to offer ſacrifice, firſt for his own ſins, and then for the people: For this he did once, when he offered up himſelf.* With the ſame idea he ſays, ix. 22. *And without ſhedding blood there is no remiſſion.* This view of the death of Chriſt occurs pretty frequently in this epiſtle to the Hebrews, but not more than about half a dozen times in all the other books of the New Teſtament; the principal of which is 1 John ii. 1. *And he is the propitiation for our ſins.* But if the great object of the death of Chriſt was the eſtabliſhment of that religion by which the world is reformed, in conſequence of which the divine being is rendered propitious to them, how natural is it to repreſent his death as a *ſacrifice* to God, for that great purpoſe? Beſides, ſacrifices for ſin under the law of Moſes are never conſidered as ſtanding in the place of the ſinner; but as the people were never to approach the divine preſence, upon any occaſion, without ſome *offering*, agreeably to the ſtanding and univerſal cuſtom of the Eaſt, with reſpect to all ſovereigns and great men, ſo no perſon after being unclean (which not only moral guilt, but a number of things abſolutely indifferent to morality were ſuppoſed to render a man) could be introduced to the tabernacle or temple ſervice, without an offering proper to the occaſion.

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This idea may explain 2 Cor. v. 21. *He made him ſin for us who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him*; becauſe by *ſin* in this place may perhaps be underſtood a *ſin-offering*. Or it may correſpond to Rom. viii. 3. *What the law could not do, in that it was weak, through the fleſh, God ſending his own ſon in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin (on account of ſin,* or *on the buſineſs of ſin,* i. e. to deſtroy and take it away) *condemned ſin in the fleſh.* In this caſe, the ſenſe of the paſſage will be, that Chriſt was made, not *ſin*, but *in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, that is, he was made *a man* for our ſakes.

Many perſons are carried away by the ſound of the word *redemption*, as if it neceſſarily implied that, mankind being in a ſtate of bondage, a price muſt be paid for their freedom, and that the death of Chriſt was that price. But the word which we render *redemption* ſignifies only *deliverance* in general, in whatever manner it be effected, and it is frequently ſo rendered by our tranſlators. Belonging to this claſs of texts are the following, Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45. *The ſon of man came not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many.* 1 Tim. ii. 8. *Who gave himſelf a ranſom for all.*

In order to judge of the meaning of this expreſſion, let the preceding paſſages be compared with the following, in which the ſame Greek word is

uſed,

uſed, Luke xxiv. 21. *We truſted that it had been he who ſhould have delivered*, or (as it might have been tranſlated) *redeemed Iſrael.* In this caſe, the diſciples certainly meant a deliverance, or redemption, from a ſtate of ſubjection to the Romans, which they could not ſuppoſe was to be effected by *purchaſe*, but by the exertion of wiſdom and power. Luke i. 68. *He has viſited, and redeemed his people*; which is explained in ver. 71, by *a deliverance from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us.* In Acts vii. 35. Stephen ſtiles Moſes a *ruler and deliverer*, or *redeemer*, but what price did he pay for their redemption? In the Old Teſtament alſo God is frequently ſaid to have *redeemed* Iſrael from the hand of the Egyptians; but he certainly did not redeem them by paying any price for their redemption, and much leſs by becoming a bondman in their place, but, as it is often expreſſed, he redeemed or delivered them, with *an high hand and an outſtretched arm.* So alſo may Chriſt be ſaid to redeem, or deliver from ſin, viz. by his precepts, by his example, and by the precious promiſes of his goſpel; by the conſideration of which we are induced to forſake ſin.

Streſs has been laid upon the word *for* in the above-mentioned paſſages, as if Chriſt dying a ranſom *for* all neceſſarily implied that he died *in the ſtead*, or *in the place*, of all; but the ſame word has other ſignifications, as *becauſe*, and ſo it is rendered

dered Luke i. 20. *Becauſe thou haſt not believed my word.* Heb. xii. 2. Who *for*, or *becauſe of the joy that was ſet before him.* It alſo ſignifies *on the behalf*, or *on the account of*, as Mat. xvii. 27. *That take, and give them for thee and me*, that is, *on the account of*, not *inſtead of* me and thee. So Chriſt died, and gave his life a ranſom, not inſtead of many, but *on the behalf of many*, or *for their benefit.*

Much ſtreſs has alſo been laid on Chriſt being ſaid to *bear the ſins of mankind*; as if they had been aſcribed or imputed to him, and he had taken them upon himſelf, and ſuffered the wrath of God for them. Iſ. liii. 11. *He ſhall bear their iniquities.* 1 Pet. ii. 24. *Who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body, on the tree.* Heb. ix. 28. *So Chriſt once ſuffered, to bear the ſins of many.*

Theſe, I think, are all the places in which this particular view of the death of Chriſt occurs. But beſide the manifeſt injuſtice, and indeed abſurdity, of an innocent perſon being puniſhed for one that is guilty, the word does not ſignify to bear *or take upon another*, but to *bear away*, or to *remove*, by whatever means; ſo that the texts above-mentioned correſpond to, 1 John iii. 5, 6. *And ye know that he was manifeſt to take away ſin, and in him was no ſin.*

The phraſe *bearing ſin* is never applied in the Old Teſtament, but to the *ſcape-goat*, which was not ſacrificed, but turned looſe in the wilderneſs, to

ſignify

ſignify the removal of the ſins of the people, which God had freely forgiven, to a place where they ſhould never more be heard of. The goat itſelf, which was emblematically ſaid to *bear* their ſins, ſuffered nothing in conſequence of it; but, as its name imports, was ſuffered to eſcape, or was let looſe. Perhaps the ſending away of the ſcape-goat was intended for a monitory ſign to the people, that they ſhould ceaſe to commit thoſe ſins which had been ſo ſolemnly confeſſed over him, and which he was ſaid to *bear away into a land of ſeparation.* See Levit. xvi. 22. in the margin.

The evangeliſt Matthew had, moſt evidently, this idea of the meaning of the paſſage in Iſaiah, when he applied it upon the occaſion of Chriſt's healing the bodily diſeaſes of men, viii. 17. For he ſays that he performed theſe cures, *that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet Iſaiah, Himſelf took our infirmities, and bare our ſickneſſes.* Now how did Chriſt *bear* the bodily diſeaſes which he cured? Not, ſurely, by taking them upon himſelf, and becoming diſeaſed, as the poor wretches themſelves had been; but by removing them by his miraculous power. In like manner Chriſt *bears*, or *takes away* ſin in general; not by ſuffering himſelf to be treated as a ſinner, but removing it, by the doctrines and motives of his goſpel. Agreeably to this, when Peter had ſaid, *Who his own ſelf bare our ſins in his own body on the tree*, he explains his

meaning in the words next following; *that we, being dead to ſin, might live unto righteouſneſs.*

Chriſt is ſaid to die a *curſe* for us in Gal. iii. 10. *Chriſt has redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us; at it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* Now it is proper enough to ſay, that Chriſt died a curſe, becauſe the manner of his death was ſimilar to that by which thoſe who were deemed *curſed* under the law were put to death. But if by *accurſed* we mean lying under the diſpleaſure of God, this was ſo far from being the caſe with reſpect to Chriſt and his death, that in this very circumſtance he was the object of the divine approbation, and complacency in the higheſt degree; as he himſelf ſays, *For this reaſon does my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life:* and it is a general obſervation in the ſcriptures, that *precious in the ſight of God is the death of his ſaints.*

Chriſt is called *a Paſſover* in 1 Cor. v. 7. *Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us:* and this view is alſo alluded to when it is ſaid, *a bone of him ſhall not be broken.* The reaſon of this view of the death of Chriſt was ſufficiently intimated before.

As a proof that Chriſt took our ſins upon him, and that we, on the other hand, are juſtified by the *imputation of his righteouſneſs to us*, ſome alledge, Jer. xxiii. 56. *And this is the name whereby he ſhall be called*, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. But, according to the method of interpreting ſcripture-

names,

names, explained above, all that we can infer from this text is, that God will be our Righteouſneſs, or receive us into his grace and favour by means of Chriſt, or by the goſpel of Chriſt. That we muſt underſtand this text in ſome ſuch ſenſe as this, is evident from the ſame name being afterwards applied to Jeruſalem. Jer. xxxiii. 16. *This is the name wherewith ſhe ſhall be called*, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS: for certainly it cannot be thought that the merits of Jeruſalem are imputed to mankind.

Many divines, finding themſelves obliged to give up the notion of Chriſt's ſuffering *in our ſtead*, and our being juſtified by his righteouſneſs, as contrary to the genuine ſenſe of the ſcriptures, alledge, however, that God forgives the ſins of mankind *on account of the merit of Chriſt*, and *his interceſſion for us*; and this opinion, like the former, is favoured by the literal ſenſe of a few paſſages of ſcripture: but it is contrary to the general and plain tenor of it, which repreſents all acts of mercy as proceeding from the eſſential placability and goodneſs of God the Father only. Beſides, there are many paſſages in the Old Teſtament in which God is repreſented as forgiving the Iſraelites, and receiving them into his favour, on the account of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; and their poſterity plead the merit of theſe their religious anceſtors in their prayers. God is alſo repreſented as ready to forgive the people of

Sodom at the interceſſion of Abraham. Admitting, therefore, that God may grant favours to mankind at the interceſſion of Chriſt, this is not a privilege *peculiar* to Chriſt, but is common to him and other good men who went before him; ſo that the *general ſyſtem*, of the forgiveneſs of ſin, can by no means depend upon the merit and interceſſion of Chriſt only.

The following paſſages ſeem to repreſent the divine being as diſpenſing mercy to mankind on the account of Chriſt, 1 John ii. 12. *Becauſe your ſins are forgiven you for his name's ſake.* Rom. viii. 34. *Who alſo maketh interceſſion for us*, 1 Cor. vi. 3. *But ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus.* Heb. vii. 25. *He ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.*

But let theſe paſſages be compared with the following from the Old Teſtament, Gen. xxvii. 24. *Fear not, I am with thee, and will bleſs thee, and multiply thy ſeed, for my ſervant Abraham's ſake.* Moſes, pleading in behalf of the Iſraelites, ſays, Exod. xxxii. 13. *Remember Abraham, and Iſaac, and Iſrael, thy ſervants.* Deut. xix. 27. *Remember thy ſervants, Abraham and Iſaac and Jacob. Look not to the ſtubbornneſs of this people, nor to their ſin.* There are many other paſſages to the ſame purpoſe with theſe.

It muſt alſo be obſerved, that *in the name of Chriſt*, which occurs in ſome of the abovementioned paſſages, means *as Chriſt*, or *in the place of Chriſt*. Thus our Lord ſays, *Many ſhall come in my name*, that is, pretending

tending to be what I am, the Meſſiah; and again, *the comforter, whom the Father ſhall ſend in my name*, that is, in *my place*, as it were, to ſucceed me in his kind offices to you. *Praying*, therefore, *in the name of Chriſt* may mean, in alluſion to this ſenſe of it, praying with the temper and diſpoſition of Chriſt, or as becomes chriſtians, thoſe who follow the directions of Chriſt, both with reſpect to prayer, and every other duty of the chriſtian life. So alſo *being juſtified in the name of Chriſt* may ſignify our being juſtified, or approved of God, in conſequence of our being chriſtians, in deed and in truth, having the ſame mind that was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus. Agreeably to this, the apoſtle Paul exhorts us *to put on Chriſt*, as if it were to appear like him, the very ſame perſon.

If the pardon of ſin had univerſally depended upon the *advocateſhip* of Chriſt only, it can hardly be ſuppoſed that the ſpirit would have had that name given to him, and eſpecially by way of eminence, and diſtinction; for the word which we render *comforter* is the ſame that is rendered *advocate* in 1. John ii. 1. *We have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.* The ſpirit is alſo ſaid to intercede for us, Rom. viii. 26. *The ſpirit itſelf maketh interceſſion for us.*

Beſides, the paſſages in which any regard is ſuppoſed to be had to the merit or interceſſion of Chriſt, in diſpenſing mercy to ſinners, are exceedingly few,

in compariſon with thoſe which repreſent this *free gift*, as proceeding from God only; and in ſome of them we are miſled by our tranſlation, as in Eph. iv. 39. *And be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Chriſt's ſake, has freely forgiven you.* It ought to have been rendered *as God in Chriſt*, that is, in the goſpel of Chriſt, has forgiven you. Beſides, the word which is here rendered *forgive* ſignifies *conferring favours* in general, and not the forgiveneſs of ſin in particular; and the whole paſſage was intended to inculcate a benevolent diſpoſition, in imitation of God, who had conferred the moſt valuable favours upon mankind, in the goſpel of Chriſt.

Many paſſages in which we are ſaid to be *juſtified by faith*, and not by *the works of the law*, were intended to oppoſe the doctrine of the jews, who maintained that the obſervance of the law of Moſes was abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation. Writing upon this ſubject, the apoſtle Paul expreſſes himſelf in the following manner, Rom. iii. 21, &c. *But now the righteouſneſs of God, without the law, is manifeſted, being witneſſed by the law and the prophets; even the righteouſneſs of God, which is by faith of Jeſus Chriſt, unto all and upon all that believe, for there is no difference. For all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God, being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus; whom God has ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith*

th in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, for the niſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the forbearance God; to declare, I ſay, at this time, his righteouſeſs, that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him that elieveth in Jeſus. Where is boaſting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is juſtified by faith, without the deeds of the law.

If we conſider the whole of this paſſage, and the connection in which it ſtands, we ſhall be ſatisfied, that the apoſtle is here aſſerting that, in the goſpel of Chriſt, which was confirmed by his death and reſurrection, the divine being, as from *a mercy-ſeat* (which the word ought to be rendered, and not *propitiation*) declares his goodneſs and mercy to mankind; and ſince the patriarchs, who believed and obeyed before the law, were juſtified without the works of the law, ſo God, acting ſtill upon the ſame maxims, is juſt, and the jews have no reaſon to complain of it, when he juſtifies ſinners who believe and obey, *freely*, and *without the works of the law of Moſes*, under the goſpel.

N. B. I do not pretend that this pamphlet contains an illuſtration of *all* the texts that have been urged in favour of the doctrines which are controverted in the *Appeal*; for then I muſt have written a commentary upon the *whole bible*, as there is hardly a text in which ſome perſons do not imagine that they ſee their own peculiar ſentiments; but I

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think I have taken notice of all that can well be ſaid to be of *much conſequence.* If any conſiderable omiſſion be pointed out to me, it ſhall be ſupplied in future editions.

A PRAYER,

RESPECTING THE PRESENT STATE OF CHRISTIANITY.

ALMIGHTY GOD, the giver of all good, and eſpecially the *Father of lights*, and the fountain of all wiſdom and knowledge; we thank thee that *thou haſt put a ſpirit in man, and that thine inſpiration giveth us underſtanding*; that, being formed after thine own image, we find ourſelves poſſeſſed of a nature ſuperior to that of brute creatures; and being endowed with the faculty of reaſon are capable of inveſtigating important truth, and of governing our conduct, ſo as to attain to very diſtinguiſhed degrees of excellence and happineſs.

We thank thee that, in aid of this *light of nature*, thou haſt ſuperadded the gift of *revelation*; having, from time to time, communicated to mankind, by thy ſervants the prophets, the moſt uſeful information, concerning thy nature, perfections and government, concerning our duty here, and our expectations hereafter. And we more eſpecially

rejoice

rejoice that, upon every occaſion of thy gracious intercourſe with mankind, thou haſt repreſented thyſelf to us as the proper object of our reverence, love, and confidence; as a being of boundleſs goodneſs, and the greateſt compaſſion to thoſe frailties and infirmities, to which it has ſeemed good to thy wiſdom to ſubject us; as one who expecteſt no more of us than thou haſt enabled us to perform; and who, upon our ſincere return to our duty, art ever ready to extend the freeſt mercy and forgiveneſs towards us, even after our moſt aggravated and repeated offences.

We thank thee, more eſpecially, for the laſt and moſt perfect revelation of thy will to mankind, in the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, in whom it hath pleaſed thee, that *all fulneſs ſhould dwell*; who has eſtabliſhed upon the ſureſt foundations, the great and important doctrines of the proper *unity* and *mercifulneſs* of thy nature, and thy unrivalled *ſupremacy* with reſpect to himſelf, as well as to all other beings, and all other things; and who has likewiſe given to us the moſt ſatisfactory aſſurance of a reſurrection from the dead, confirmed to us by his own death and reſurrection; whereby we are encouraged to expect, that, becauſe he lives, we ſhall live alſo.

It has ſeemed good to thy unſearchable wiſdom, (which permits the riſe and continuance of evil, in order, we doubt not, to bring about the greateſt

good)

good) that this moſt excellent religion, ſo honourable to thee and ſo beneficial to mankind, ſhould, by means of the baſe *artifices* of ſome, and the general *ignorance* which lately overſpread the world, become groſsly corrupted; whereby ſuch opinions have prevailed among the profeſſors of chriſtianity, as greatly diſhonour thy nature, imply the moſt unjuſt reflections on thy righteous moral government, and are highly injurious to the virtue and happineſs of men. How has the gold become dim, how is the moſt fine gold changed!

The great and important doctrine of thy divine *unity* has been generally abandoned, and objects of ſupreme worſhip multiplied. Thy meſſenger and ſervant, the meek and humble Jeſus, who, upon all occaſions, referred his wiſdom and mighty works to thee, his God and Father, ſpeaking and acting by him, has been advanced to proper equality with thyſelf; and even his mother, Mary, and innumerable ſaints and angels, have likewiſe, been addreſſed, as if they were omnipreſent beings. By thus dividing thy being, robbing thee of thy eſſential attributes and perfections, and diſtributing them among a multiplicity of inferior beings, depraved and unworthy notions of thy moral character have conſequently prevailed, and many of the evils of *idolatry* have been introduced among the profeſſors of that religion, which acknowledges but

one:

one *living and true God*, even thee our Father in heaven, and one mediator, the man Chriſt Jeſus.

Having diveſted thee, in their imaginations, of the moſt amiable of all thy attributes, even the eſſential *placability* of thy nature, they have repreſented thy free mercy to penitent ſinners as purchaſed by the blood of thy innocent ſon. Forgetting that thou art good to all, and that thy tender-mercies are over all thy works, and alſo that thou, the righteous Lord, loveſt righteouſneſs, they have aſcribed to thee an arbitary and unreaſonable partiality in favour of ſome of the human race, and a moſt cruel and unjuſt ſeverity towards others, as condemning them to everlaſting torments for crimes of which they could not be guilty, and expecting of them that which thou hadſt not enabled them to do. And, having loſt the idea of the *purity* of thy nature and thy regard to moral righteouſneſs, as the only juſt ground of acceptance and favour with thee, they have had recourſe to unmeaning and even baſe and miſchievous ſuperſtitions as compenſations for their non-obſervance of thy holy commandments.

To confirm all theſe, and innumerable other corruptions of thy holy religion, ſupreme authority has been openly uſurped by men over that church, in which thou haſt given all power to our Lord and maſter Jeſus Chriſt; and thoſe of thy faithful ſervants, who have juſtly refuſed to ſubmit to their uſurpations

uſurpations, have by them been ſubjected to the greateſt hardſhips, and even perſecuted unto death; ſo that theſe temporal antichriſtian powers are drunk with the blood of thy holy martyrs.

We deeply lament this almoſt univerſal departure from the true faith of thy ſon's goſpel, the ſtop that has by this means been ſo long put to the propagation of chriſtianity among jews, mahomedans, and heathens, and the prevalence which it has occaſioned of infidelity and profaneneſs in chriſtian countries.

But we thank thee, who, in thine own due time, wilt, we doubt not, bring light out of all darkneſs, and order out of all confuſion, that, in ſeveral chriſtian countries, many of theſe corruptions and abuſes have been reformed, and that antichriſtian tyranny is every where giving place to the power of truth, and the juſt liberties of mankind, in thinking and acting for themſelves in all matters of religion.

For theſe great and invaluable bleſſings we are, under thee, indebted to the ſtrenuous labours of thy faithful ſervants, who have not accounted even their lives dear unto them; but, for the love of thy truth, have renounced all worldly advantages, boldly aſſerting their chriſtian liberty, and holding themſelves accountable to none but thee, the ſole and immediate lord of conſcience, and to the great

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epherd and biſhop of ſouls, acting by commiſſion om thee, Jeſus Chriſt.

We adore the wiſdom of thy providence in bring- ng about the reſtoration of uſeful *learning*, and aking it ſubſervient to the reformation of thy hurch; ſo that thy ſervants, having recovered the enuine, but long-forgotten ſenſe of the ſcriptures, ere able to diſcover the falſe grounds of the eigning ſuperſtition, and of the eccleſiaſtical yranny of their times. Grant that, by a con- inued and diligent ſtudy of the ſame word of thy ruth, we may, in due time, be led to the full diſ- covery of every remaining corruption of our holy eligion, and be brought to receive the whole truth n the love thereof.

Haſten, we intreat thee, the approach of that glorious time when, according to the faithful and true writings of thy ſervants the prophets, our holy religion ſhall recover its primitive purity and efficacy; when thou alone, as the only true God, a being of perfect rectitude, ſpotleſs purity, and eſſential goodneſs and mercy, ſhalt be the object of ſupreme worſhip; when thy creatures of mankind ſhall have recourſe to no method of rendering them- ſelves acceptable to thee, but unfeigned repentance for their trangreſſions of thy laws, and a ſincere endeavour to conform to them for the future, in a courſe of upright intentions and worthy actions, through the whole of their lives; and when no

apprehenſion of arbitrary decrees ſhall alarm the fears of the humble, or encourage the preſumption of the confident.

Diſpoſe all who profeſs the chriſtian name to ſtudy the ſcriptures of truth with unprejudiced minds; and inſpire all thoſe who attain to the truth with a iuſt *zeal* for the propagation of it, as far as thy providence ſhall give them ability and opportunity to do it. May neither the love of popular applauſe, of filthy lucre, or any worldly advantage; may neither the fear of man, of reproach, or of death, be a ſnare to them, in this work of love; and may they daily rejoice in the teſtimony of their conſciences, and in the happy fruits of their pious and aſſiduous labours.

May all thoſe powers of this world, which have uſurped any authority belonging to our only rightful lord and king in his church, become diſpoſed to relinquiſh their unjuſt claims; and may thoſe kings and princes, who will not acknowledge the ſovereignty of Jeſus in his church, and eſpecially thoſe who obſtinately oppoſe the reformation of it, be utterly confounded, and, by his power, be broken in pieces like a potter's veſſel. Take to thyſelf, O Lord God Almighty, thy great power, and reign; and may the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt go forth conquering and to conquer. May the everlaſting goſpel, in its primitive purity, be preached to all that dwell on the earth, to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. By the brightneſs of our Lord's appearance, may the man of

be utterly conſumed, that all the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our lord and of his Chriſt, and may he reign for ever and ever.

In the mean time, may we thy faithful ſervants, in the patient waiting for this coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, be fearleſs and unwearied in aſſerting thy truth, be ready to lay hold of every favourable opportunity to promote it, and, more eſpecially, be careful to recommend it by a ſuitable life and converſation. May we diſtinguiſh ourſelves by having the ſame mind that was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus, by genuine humility, meekneſs, forbearance, brotherly love, heavenly-mindedneſs, and habitual chearful devotion; that when our lord ſhall return, and take account of his ſervants, we may be found without ſpot and blameleſs, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming.

Now to thee, who alone art eternal, immortal, and inviſible, the only wiſe, living, and true God, be glory, through Jeſus Chriſt, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE CONCLUSION.

THIS publication completes the ſcheme which was begun in the *Appeal*, and continued in the *Triumph of Truth*; being intended to be a plain and earneſt addreſs to the common people, and eſpecially

ally to thoſe of them who have but little money to ſpare for the purchaſe of books, or time for the reading of them.

I am not ſo little acquainted with human nature, as to expect any *great ſucceſs* in this attempt to overturn long-eſtabliſhed errors; and leaſt of all can I hope to convince thoſe who refuſe to read, or to hear (which is the caſe with too many) on whom even miracles could produce no effect; but the reſtoration of chriſtianity to its primitive purity and efficacy, after ſo long and ſo radical a corruption (which was foreſeen and lamented by the inſpired writers of the New Teſtament) is ſo great and ſo worthy an object, that every man, who has the intereſt of religion at heart, will rejoice in every opportunity that divine providence affords him for promoting it, with reſpect to ever ſo few, or even a ſingle individual of his fellow-creatures.

A zeal for the truth, and even to *contend earneſtly* for it, does certainly well become a chriſtian. Since, however, the inſpiring of a *chriſtian ſpirit* is the great purpoſe to which purity of *chriſtian faith* is ſubſervient, I hope that, with reſpect to myſelf, I have been careful not to loſe the *end*, while I have been contending for the *means*. Of th myread er may be a pretty good judge; ſince that zeal which ariſes from the love of truth, and of mankind, will eaſily be diſtinguiſhed from that ſpirit which actuates thoſe whom Paul calls the *diſ-*

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puters of this world, a ſpirit which ſavours ſtrongly of *pride*, *hatred* and *malice*, and which often induces them to have recourſe to unfair and unworthy *artifices* in order to gain a victory.

Some perſons think that in theſe publications I have attacked *too many* long-eſtabliſhed errors, and that it would have been more prudent to have attempted one thing at once, and to have proceeded gradually and gently. But it ſhould be conſidered, that there are in the world perſons in every poſſible ſtate of mind with reſpect to theſe things; ſo that what will ſtagger ſome is calculated to make the ſtrongeſt and beſt impreſſion upon others. Since, therefore, every thing that is publiſhed from the preſs muſt be diſtributed *promiſcuouſly*, we can only take care that what we write be calculated to do good in general; and ſince a nice calculation of this kind is exceedingly difficult, it appears to me to be the beſt, upon the whole, for every perſon to endeavour to eſtabliſh what appears to himſelf to be *the whole truth*, and not to trouble himſelf about any conſequences. The goſpel-ſower muſt caſt his ſeed promiſcuouſly on all kinds of ground, hoping that in ſome it may yield a good increaſe, though he muſt lay his account with its being loſt, and even worſe than loſt upon others.

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I alſo think it an objection to the ſlow and cautious proceeding which ſome perſons recommend, that the evidence of any truth is exhibited

to the moſt advantage in connection with the *whole ſyſtem* to which it belongs. Nor would I conclude that becauſe the minds of many are ſtaggered by bold and undiſguiſed repreſentations of truth, this mode of proceeding is, upon the whole, leſs effectual. In many caſes it may be the only method of gaining a ſufficient degree of *attention* to a ſubject; and when this only is done, a great point is gained. The horror with which an offenſive ſentiment is viewed at firſt may wear off by degrees, and a cool examination ſucceed. What could give more offence, even to good minds, than the manner in which Luther, and other reformers, attacked the church of Rome? Any perſon would have imagined, *a priori*, that it could only offend and irritate. We muſt wait a conſiderable time before we can form a judgment of the number of converts that any perſon makes.

I cannot help expreſſing my ſurprize that ſo many perſons, and eſpecially of the clergy of the eſtabliſhed church, ſhould profeſs themſelves *Arminians*, rejecting the Calviniſtic doctrines of election and reprobation, and yet entertain ſuch a horror of *Arianiſm*, or *Socinianiſm*, contending with the greateſt earneſtneſs for the divinity of Chriſt, and atonement for ſin by his death; when it appears to me, that the literal interpretation of the language of ſcripture (which is almoſt all that can be pleaded in favour of any of thoſe opinions) is even more favourable

vourable to the former than to the latter, as, I ſhould think, muſt appear to any perſon who will attend to thoſe which I have quoted in this treatiſe. I know that I have found much more difficulty in my attempts to explain them. I conſider it, however, as an undoubted ſign of the progreſs of juſt thinking in matters of religion, that the *ſtandard of orthodoxy* is ſo much lower at preſent than it has been in former times.

Time was, and, though I am not old, I well remember the time, when Arminians would have been reckoned no better than Socinians by thoſe who were reputed the *orthodox* of their day; and yet with what rage have ſome of theſe *orthodox-writers*, attacked a *brother-heretic?* How would the manes of thoſe old champions ſmile to ſee us *fall out by the way*, when they were confident that we muſt all come to the ſame place of torment at laſt; and the furious zeal of thoſe veterans was far more plauſible and reſpectable, than that of the modern pretenders to orthodoxy?

There is ſomething *ſtriking* and *conſiſtent* in the genuine *Supralapſarian ſyſtem*, of the eternally deſtined fall of man, an infinite penalty incurred by one, and, by the imputation of his ſin, affecting all, and an infinite atonement adequate to it made by an infinite being; by which means a ſmall remnant of the human race are neceſſarily ſaved, while all the reſt of mankind, including new-born children,

dren, unbelieving jews, mahometans and heathens, arminians and baxterians, arians and ſocinians, without diſtinction (as deſtitute either of faith, or the right faith) are conſigned to everlaſting torments with the devil and his angels; from whence reſults *glory* to a God, who, in all this dreadful ſcheme, is ſuppoſed to have ſought nothing elſe.

Theſe are the *tremendous doctrines* which have over-awed mankind for ſo many centuries; and, compared with this, all the modern *qualified, intermediate ſyſtems* are crude, incoherent, and contemptible things. My antagoniſts may cavil at *election and reprobation*, or any other ſingle article in the well-compacted ſyſtem, but every part is neceſſary to the whole; and if one ſtone be puſhed out of its place, the whole building tumbles to the ground. And when, in conſequence of their ill-judged attempts to alter, patch, and repair, they have brought things to this cataſtrophe, there will be nothing left but the ſimple belief, that the merciful parent of the univerſe, who never meant any thing but the happineſs of his creatures, ſent his well-beloved ſon, *the man, Chriſt Jeſus*, to reclaim men from their wickedneſs, and to teach them the way of righteouſneſs; aſſuring them, for their encouragement, of the free and unbought pardon of their ſins, and promiſing a life of endleſs happineſs to all that receive and obey the goſpel, by repenting

of

of their ſins, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance.

This is the eſſence of what is called *ſocinianiſm*; and though this ſimple doctrine may, on account of its excellence and ſimplicity, be a ſtumbling-block to ſome, and fooliſhneſs to others, I believe it to be the ſum and ſubſtance of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, and the wiſdom and power of God.

Formidable as the greateſt adverſary of the truth may be, I make no doubt but that, by the help of reaſon, and the *ſword of the ſpirit, which is the word of God*, it will be finally overcome. And whenever the *holy apoſtles and prophets ſhall rejoice* at the fall of this laſt part of *myſtical Babylon*, Rev. xviii. 20; happy will they be who may join the chorus, as having employed their efforts, however feeble, with thoſe who, in this great cauſe, fight under *the banners of the lamb*, and *who are called, and choſen, and faithful*; Rev. xvii. 14.

A GENERAL VIEW

OF THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE

UNITY OF GOD;

AND AGAINST THE

DIVINITY AND PRE-EXISTENCE

OF

CHRIST;

FROM REASON, FROM THE SCRIPTURES, AND FROM HISTORY.

A

GENERAL VIEW.

I. ARGUMENTS FROM REASON AGAINST THE TRINITARIAN HYPOTHESIS.

THAT the doctrine of the trinity could ever have been ſuggeſted by any thing in the courſe of *nature* (though it has been imagined by ſome perſons of a peculiarly fanciful turn, and previouſly perſuaded of the truth of it) is not maintained by any perſons to whom my writings can be at all uſeful. I ſhall therefore only addreſs myſelf to thoſe who believe the doctrine on the ſuppoſition of its being contained in the *ſcriptures*, at the ſame time maintaining, that, though it is *above*, it is not properly *contrary* to reaſon; and I hope to make it ſufficiently evident, either that they do not hold the doctrine, or that the opinion of *three divine perſons conſtituting one God* is ſtrictly ſpeaking an *abſurdity*, or *contradiction*; and that it is therefore incapable of any proof, even by miracles. With this view, I ſhall recite in order all the diſtinct modifications of this doctrine, and ſhew that, upon any of them, there is either no proper *unity*, in the divine nature, or no proper *trinity*.

If, with Dr. Waterland, and others who are reckoned the ſtricteſt Athanaſians, (though their opinions were not known in the time of Athanaſius himſelf,) it be ſuppoſed that there are three perſons properly equal, and that no one of them has any

ſort of ſuperiority over the reſt, they are, to all intents and purpoſes, three diſtinct Gods. For if each of them, ſeparately conſidered, be poſſeſſed of all divine perfections, ſo that nothing is wanting to complete divinity, each of them muſt be as properly *a God* as any being poſſeſſed of all the properties of man muſt be a man, and therefore *three perſons* poſſeſſed of all the attributes of divinity muſt be as properly *three Gods* as three perſons poſſeſſed of all human artributes muſt be three men. Theſe three perſons, therefore, muſt be incapable of any ſtrict or numerical *unity*. It muſt be univerſally true, that *three things* to which the ſame definition applies can never make only *one thing* to which the ſame definition applies. And when by the words *thing*, *being*, or *perſon* we mean nothing more than, logically ſpeaking, the *ſubject*, or *ſubſtratum of properties* or *attributes*, it is a matter of indifference which of them we make uſe of.

Each of theſe three perſons may have other properties, but they muſt be numerically *three* in that reſpect in which the ſame definition applies to them. If, therefore, the three perſons agree in this circumſtance, that they are each of them *perfect God*, though they may differ in other reſpects, and have peculiar relations to each other, and to us, they muſt ſtill be *three Gods*; and to ſay that they are only *one God* is as much a contradiction, as to ſay that three men, though they differ from one another

ther as much as three men can do, are not three men, but only one man.

If it be ſaid, with the Antenicene fathers, and with biſhops Pearſon and Bull, among the modern Engliſh writers, that the Father is the *fountain of deity*, and that the ſon is derived from him, whether neceſſarily or voluntarily, whether in time or from eternity, they cannot be of the ſame *rank*: but the Father will be poſſeſſed of an original, a real, and proper ſuperiority to the Son; who will be no more than an *effect* upon the Father's exertion of his powers, which is, to all intents and purpoſes, making the Son to be a *production* or *creature* of the Father; even though it ſhould be ſuppoſed with the antients that he was created out of the ſubſtance of the Father, and without taking any thing from him. Moreover, as upon this ſcheme the Son was never capable of giving birth to another perſon like himſelf, he muſt have been originally inferior in power to the Father, the ſource from which he himſelf ſprang. On this ſcheme, therefore, there is no proper *equality* between theſe divine perſons; and the Antenicene Fathers did not pretend that there was, but diſtinguiſhed the Father by the epithet of αυτοθεος, *God of himſelf*, and the Son by the inferior title of θεος εκ θεου, *God of God*, or a derived God.

If it be ſaid that there is only one intelligent ſupreme mind, but that it exerts itſelf three different ways, and has three different modes of action, or

operation (which was the opinion of Dr. Wallis, and that which was generally aſcribed to the ancient Sabellians), with reſpect to one of which the ſame divine Being was called the Father, to another the Son, and another the Holy Spirit; there is no proper *trinity* at all. For on the ſame principle one man, bearing three different offices, or having three different relations or capacities, as thoſe of magiſtrate, father, ſon, &c. would be three different men.

Some repreſent themſelves as believing the doctrine of the trinity by aſſerting with Dr. Doddridge*, that "God is ſo united to the derived "nature of Chriſt, and does ſo dwell in it, that, "by virtue of that *union*, Chriſt may be properly "called God, and ſuch regards become due to him, "as are not due to any created nature, or mere "creature, be it in itſelf ever ſo excellent."

What this *union* is, in conſequence of which any creature can be entitled to the attributes and honours of his creator, is not pretended to be explained; but as we cannot poſſibly have any idea of an union between God and a creature, beſides that of God being preſent with that creature, and acting by him, which is the ſame thing that is aſſerted by the *Arians* or *Socinians*, theſe nominal *trinitarians* muſt neceſſarily belong to one or other of theſe two claſſes. This is ſo evident, that it is hardly poſſible

* See his Lectures, propoſition 128, p. 392.

ble not to ſuppoſe but that they muſt have been much aſſiſted at leaſt in deceiving themſelves into a belief that they were trinitarians, by the influence which a dread of the odium and other inconveniences attending the Arian or Socinian doctrine had on their minds. The preſence of God the Father with any creature, whether it be called an union with him, or it be expreſſed in any other manner whatever, can be nothing more than the *unity of the Father* in that creature; and whatever it be that God voluntarily imparts, he may withdraw again at pleaſure. And what kind of divinity muſt that be, which is dependent upon the will of another?

Upon none of the modifications, therefore, which have been mentioned (and all others may be reduced to theſe) can the doctrine of the trinity, or of three divine perſons in one God be ſupported. In moſt of them the doctrine itſelf is loſt, and where it remains it is inconſiſtent with reaſon and common ſenſe.

II. Arguments from reason against the Arian hypothesis.

The Arian doctrine, of the world having been made and governed not by the ſupreme God himſelf, but by Chriſt, the Son of God, though no contradiction in itſelf, is, on ſeveral accounts, highly improbable.

Our reaſoning from effects to cauſes carries us no farther than to the immediate creator of the viſible univerſe. For if we can ſuppoſe that being to have had a cauſe, or author, we may ſuppoſe that his cauſe or author had a higher cauſe, and ſo on *ad infinitum*. According to the light of nature, therefore, the immediate cauſe or author of the viſible univerſe is the ſelf-exiſtent firſt cauſe, and not any being acting under him, as his inſtrument. However, the ſcheme itſelf is not naturally impoſſible, ſince a being poſſeſſed of power ſufficient to produce the viſible univerſe, which is a limited production, may be *finite*, and therefore may derive his power, and his being, from one who is ſuperior to him. But though the Arian ſcheme cannot be ſaid to be in itſelf impoſſible, it is, on ſeveral accounts, extremely improbable *a priori*, and therefore ought not to be admitted without very ſtrong and clear evidence.

If this great derived being, the ſuppoſed maker and governor of the world, was united to a human body, he muſt either have retained, and have exerciſed, his extraordinary powers during this union, or have been diveſted of them; and either ſuppoſition has its peculiar difficulties and improbabilities.

If this great being retained his proper powers during this union, he muſt have been ſuſtaining the whole univerſe, and ſuperintending all the laws of nature, while he was an infant at the breaſt of his mother,

mother, and while he hung upon the croſs. And to imagine the creator of the world to have been in thoſe circumſtances is an idea at which the mind revolts, almoſt as much as at that of the ſupreme God himſelf being reduced to them.

Beſides, if Chriſt retained, and exerciſed all his former powers in this ſtate of apparent humiliation, he muſt have wrought all his miracles by a power properly *his own*, a power naturally *belonging to him*, as much as the power of ſpeaking and walking belongs to any other man. But this was expreſsly diſclaimed by our Saviour, when he ſaid, that *of himſelf he could do nothing*, and that it was the *Father within him who did the works*. Alſo, on this ſuppoſition, it muſt have been this ſuper-angelic being united to the body of Jeſus, that raiſed him from the dead; whereas this is an effect which is always aſcribed to God the Father only.

If, on the other hand, Chriſt was diveſted of his original powers, or *emptied himſelf* of them upon his incarnation, the whole ſyſtem of the government of the univerſe muſt have been changed during his reſidence upon earth. Either ſome other derived being (which this ſcheme does not provide) muſt have taken his place, or the ſupreme being himſelf muſt have condeſcended to do that which the ſcheme ſuppoſes there was an impropriety in his doing. For certainly the making and the governing of the world would not have been delegated to another,

another, if there had not been ſome good reaſon in the nature of things (though it be unknown to us, and may be undiſcoverable by us) why the world ſhould have been made and governed by a derived being, and not by the ſupreme being himſelf. And this reaſon, whatever it was, muſt, as far as we can judge, have operated during the time that Chriſt was upon the earth, as well as before.

If Chriſt was degraded to the ſtate of a mere man during his humiliation on earth, reaſon will aſk, why might not a mere man have been ſufficient; ſince, notwithſtanding his original powers, nothing was, in fact, done by him, more than any other man, aided and aſſiſted by God as he was, might have been equal to?

If we conſider the object of Chriſt's miſſion, and the beings whom it reſpected, viz. the *race of man*, we cannot but think that there muſt have been a greater propriety, and uſe, in the appointment of a mere man to that office. What occaſion was there for any being ſuperior to man for the purpoſe of communicating the will of God to man? And as an example of a reſurrection to an immortal life (to enforce which was the great object of his miſſion) the death and reſurrection of one who was properly and ſimply a man was certainly far better adapted to give men ſatisfaction concerning their own future reſurrection, than the ſeeming death (for it could be nothing more) of ſuch a being

as

as the maker of the world, and the reſurrection of a body to which he had been united. For, as he was a being of ſo much higher rank, it might be ſaid, that the laws of his nature might be very different from thoſe of ours; and therefore he might have privileges to which we could not pretend, and to which we ought not to aſpire.

If the world was created and governed by a derived being, this being, on whom we immediately depended, would be that to whom all men would naturally look. He would neceſſarily become the object of their prayers, in conſequence of which the ſupreme being would be overlooked, and become a mere cypher in the univerſe.

As modern philoſophy ſuppoſes that there are innumerable worlds inhabited by rational and imperfect beings (for all *creatures* muſt be finite and imperfect) beſides this of ours, it cannot be ſuppoſed but that many of them muſt have ſtood in as much need of the interpoſition of the maker of the univerſe as we have done. And can we ſuppoſe either that this ſhould be the only ſpot in the univerſe ſo highly diſtinguiſhed, or that the maker of it ſhould undergo as many degradations as this ſcheme may require?

The doctrine of Chriſt's pre-exiſtence goes upon the idea of the poſſibility, at leaſt, of the pre-exiſtence of other men, and ſuppoſes an immaterial ſoul in man, altogether independent of the body; ſo that

that it muſt have been capable of thinking, and acting before his birth, as well as it will be after his death. But theſe are ſuppoſitions which no appearance in nature favours.

The arian hypotheſis, therefore, though it implies no proper contradiction, is, on ſeveral accounts, highly improbable *a priori*, and therefore ought not to be admitted without very clear and ſtrong evidence.

III. Arguments against the trinitarian and the arian hypotheses from the scriptures.

I shall now ſhew, in as conciſe a manner as I can, that the doctrine of the trinity, and alſo the arian hypotheſis, have as little countenance from the ſcriptures as they have from reaſon. The ſcriptures teach us that there is but one God, who is himſelf the maker and the governor of all things; that this one God is the ſole object of worſhip, and that he ſent Jeſus Chriſt to inſtruct mankind, empowered him to work miracles, raiſed him from the dead, and gave him all the power that he ever was, or is now poſſeſſed of.

1. The ſcriptures contain the cleareſt and moſt expreſs declarations, that there is but *one God*, without ever mentioning any exception in favour of a *trinity*, or guarding us againſt being led into any miſtake by ſuch general and unlimited expreſſions.

preſſions. Ex. xx. 3. *Thou ſhalt have no other God before me.* Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord.* Mark xii. 29. *The firſt of all the commandments is, Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is one Lord.* 1 Cor. viii. 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we in him.* Eph. iv. 5, 6. *One Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* 1 Tim. ii. 5. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus.*

On the other hand, not only does the word *trinity* never occur in the ſcriptures, but it is no where ſaid that *there are three perſons in this one God:* nor is the doctrine explicitly laid down in any other direct propoſition whatever. Chriſt indeed ſays, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one*; but he ſufficiently explains himſelf, by praying that his diſciples might be one with him in the ſame ſenſe in which he was one with the Father. John xvii. 21, 22. *That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us; and the glory which thou gaveſt to me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.*

2. This one God is ſaid to have created all things; and no intimation is given of his having employed any *inferior agent* or *inſtrument* in the work of creation. Gen. i. 1. *In the beginning God created the*

the heaven and the earth—ver. 3. *God ſaid, let there be light and there was light*, &c. Pſ. xxxiii. 6. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth*—ver. 9. *He ſpake, and it was done; he commanded, and it ſtood faſt.* Iſ. xliv. 24. *Thus ſaith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things, that ſtretcheth forth the heavens alone, that ſpreadeth abroad the earth by myſelf.*

3. This one God is called *the Father*, i. e. the author of all beings; and he is called God and Father with reſpect to Chriſt, as well as all other perſons. John vi. 27. *Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlaſting life, which the ſon of man ſhall give unto you; for him hath God the Father ſealed.* John xvii. 3. *That they might know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* John xx. 17. *Go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God, and your God.* Eph. i. 17. *That the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the father of glory, may give unto you the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.* Col. i. 3. *We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

4. Chriſt is ſaid expreſsly to be inferior to the Father, all his power is ſaid to have been given him by the Father, and he could do nothing with-

out the Father. John xvi. 28. *My Father is greater than I.* 1 Cor. iii. 23. *Ye are Chriſt's and Chriſt is God's.* 1 Cor. xi. 3. *The head of Chriſt is God.* John v. 19. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, the Son can do nothing of himſelf.* John xiv. 10. *The words that I ſpeak unto you I ſpeak not of myſelf, and the Father that dwelleth in me he doth the works.* Matt. xxviii. 18. *All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.* 2 Pet. i. 17. *He received from God the Father honour and glory.* Rev. i. 1. *The revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him.*

It is now alledged that Chriſt did not mean that he was inferior to the Father with reſpect to his *divine nature*, but only with reſpect to his *human nature*. But if ſuch liberties be taken in explaining a perſon's meaning, language has no uſe whatever. On the ſame principles, it might be aſſerted that Chriſt never died, or that he never roſe from the dead, ſecretly meaning his divine nature only. There is no kind of impoſition but what might be authorized by ſuch an abuſe of language as this.

5. Some things were with-held from Chriſt by his Father. Mark xiii. 32. *But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man; no not the angels that are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.* Matt. xx. 23. *To ſit on my right-hand and on my left, is not mine to give; bu it ſhall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

6. As all the dominion that Chriſt has was derived from the Father, ſo it is ſubordinate to that of the Father. 1 Cor. xv. 24, &c. *Then cometh the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he ſhall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he muſt reign 'till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he ſaith that all things are put under him, it is manifeſt that he is excepted who did put all things under him. And when all things ſhall be ſubdued to him, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

7. Chriſt always prayed to the Father, and with as much humility and reſignation, as any man, or the moſt dependent being in the univerſe, could poſſibly do. Our Lord's whole hiſtory is a proof of this; but eſpecially the ſcene of his agony in the garden, Matt. xxvi. 37, &c. *And he began to be ſorry and very heavy. Then ſaith he unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful even unto death, tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

8. Chriſt is not only ſtiled *a man* even after his reſurrection, but the reaſoning of the apoſtles, in ſome of the paſſages where he is ſpoken of, requires that

that he ſhould be conſidered as a man with reſpect to *his nature*, and not in *name* only, as their reaſoning has no force but upon that ſuppoſition. Acts ii. 22. *Jeſus of Nazareth, a man approved of by God, by miracles and wonders and ſigns, which God did by him in the midſt of you.* Heb. ii. 17. *Wherefore it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren.* Heb. ii. 10. *It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make the captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſufferings.* 1 Cor. xv. 21. *For ſince by man came death, by man came alſo the reſurrection from the dead: for as in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.*

9. Whatever exaltation Chriſt now enjoys it is the gift of his Father, and the reward of his obedience unto death. Phil. ii. 8, 9. *And being in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs. Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.* Heb. ii. 9, *But we ſee Jeſus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the ſuffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.* Heb. xii. 2. *Looking unto Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith; who for the joy which was ſet before him endured the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame and is ſitten down at the right-hand of the throne of God.*

Let it alſo be conſidered, that no *uſe* whatever is made of the doctrine of the incarnation of the

maker of the world, in all the New Teſtan
We are neither informed why ſo extraordina
meaſure was neceſſary for the ſalvation of men,
that it *was* neceſſary. All that can be pretende
that it is *alluded to* in certain expreſſions.
certainly it might have been expected that a mea
of this magnitude ſhould have been expr
declared, if not clearly explained; that man
might have no doubt what great things had
done for them; and that they might reſpect
great deliverer, as his nature, and his proper
in the creation required.

The author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews evide
conſidered Chriſt as a being of a different rank
that of angels; and the reaſon why he ſays tha
ought to be ſo, is, that he might have a feelin
our infirmities. But, certainly, we ſhall be
eaſily ſatisfied that any perſon really *felt* as a
if he was truly a man, and nothing more th
man; than if he was a ſuperior being (and eſpec
a being ſo far ſuperior to us as the maker of
world muſt have been) degraded to the cond
of a man; becauſe, if he had any recollectio
his former ſtate, the idea of that muſt have b
him up under his difficulties and ſufferings, in
a manner as no mere man could have been
ported: and it is ſuppoſed by the arians that C
had a knowledge of his prior ſtate, for they ſup
him to have referred to it in his prayer to the Fa

for *the glory which he had with him before the world was*; and yet this is hardly conſiſtent with the account that Luke gives of his *increaſing in wiſdom*.

No perſon, I think, can, with an unprejudiced mind, attend to theſe conſiderations, and the texts of ſcripture above recited (which are perfectly agreeable to the tenor of the whole) and imagine that it was the intention of the ſacred writers to repreſent Chriſt either as the ſupreme God, or as the maker of the world under God.

There is another hypotheſis, of ſome modern arians, which repreſents Chriſt as having pre-exiſted, but not as having been the creator or governor of the world, or the medium of all the diſpenſations of God to mankind. But thoſe texts of ſcripture which ſeem to be moſt expreſs in favour of Chriſt's pre-exiſtence do likewiſe, by the ſame mode of interpretation, repreſent him as the maker of the world; ſo that if the favourers of this hypotheſis can ſuppoſe the language of theſe texts to be figurative, they may more eaſily ſuppoſe the other to be figurative alſo; and that whatever obſcurity there may be in them, they were not intended to refer to any pre-exiſtence at all.

The paſſages of ſcripture which are ſuppoſed to ſpeak of Chriſt as the maker of the world are the following, viz. John i. 3. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 15, Heb. i. 1. &c. Theſe, I will venture to ſay, are the texts that moſt ſtrongly favour the notion of Chriſt's

pre-exiſtence, and no perſon can doubt but that, if they muſt be interpreted to aſſert that Chriſt pre-exiſted at all, they, with the ſame clearneſs, aſſert that he was the maker of the world. But if theſe texts admit of a figurative interpretation, all the other texts, which are ſuppoſed to refer to the *pre-exiſtence only*, will more eaſily admit of a ſimilar conſtruction. Theſe two opinions, therefore, viz. that Chriſt pre-exiſted, and that he was the maker of the world, ought, by all means, to ſtand or fall together, and if any perſon think the latter to be improbable, and contrary to the plain tenor of the ſcriptures (which uniformly repreſent the ſupreme being himſelf, without the aid of any inferior agent, or inſtrument, as the maker of the univerſe) he ſhould abandon the doctrine of ſimple pre-exiſtence alſo.

In what manner the proper unitarians interpret theſe paſſages of ſcripture may be ſeen in my *Familiar illuſtration of particular texts of ſcripture*, in ſeveral of the *ſocinian tracts*, in three volumes quarto, and eſpecially in *Mr. Lindſey's Sequel to his Apology*, p. 455, to which I refer my reader for a farther diſcuſſion of this ſubject.

It is only of late years, that any perſons have pretended to ſeparate the two opinions of Chriſt's pre-exiſtence, and of his being the maker of the world. All the ancient arians maintained both, as did Dr. Clarke, Mr. Whiſton, Mr. Emlyn, Mr. Pierce,

Pierce, and their followers; and I do not know that any other hypotheſis has appeared in *writing*, except that it is alluded to in the Theological Repoſitory.

IV. *Arguments from Hiſtory againſt the Divinity and Pre-exiſtence of Chriſt; or a ſummary view of the evidence for the primitive chriſtians having held the doctrine of the ſimple humanity of Chriſt.*

N.B. To each article is ſubjoined a reference to publications in which the ſubject is diſcuſſed: H. ſignifying the *Hiſtory of the Corruptions of Chriſtianity*. vol. 1. R. *Reply to the Monthly Review*, and L. *Letters to Dr. Horſley*. To each article is alſo ſubjoined a reference to the following *Maxims of Hiſtorical Criticiſm*.

1. It is acknowledged by early writers of the orthodox perſuaſion, that two kinds of hereſy exiſted in the time of the apoſtles, viz. that of thoſe who held that Chriſt was ſimply a man, and that of the Gnoſtics, of whom ſome believed that Chriſt was man only in appearance, and others that it was only *Jeſus* and not the *Chriſt* (a pre-exiſtent ſpirit who deſcended from heaven and dwelt in him) that ſuffered on the croſs. Now the apoſtle John animadverts with the greateſt ſeverity upon the latter, but makes no mention of the former; and can it be thought probable that he would paſs it without cenſure, if he had thought it to be an error; conſidering how great, and how dangerous

an

an error it has always been thought by thoſe who have conſidered it as being an error at all? Maxim 12. H. p. 9.

2. The great objection that jews have always made to chriſtianity in its preſent ſtate is, that it enjoins the worſhip of more gods than one; and it is a great article with the chriſtian writers of the ſecond and following centuries to anſwer this objection. But it does not appear in all the book of Acts, in which we hear much of the cavils of the jews, both in Jeruſalem and in many parts of the Roman empire, that they made any ſuch objection to chriſtianity *then*; nor do the apoſtles either there, or in their epiſtles, advance any thing with a view to ſuch an objection. It may be preſumed, therefore, that no ſuch offence to the jews had then been given, by the preaching of a doctrine ſo offenſive to them as that of the divinity of Chriſt muſt have been. Maxim 12, 13. L. p. 59.

3. As no jew had originally any idea of their Meſſiah being more than a man, and as the apoſtles and the firſt chriſtians had certainly the ſame idea at firſt concerning Jeſus, it may be ſuppoſed that, if ever they had been informed that Jeſus was not a man, but either God himſelf, or the maker of the world under God, we ſhould have been able to trace the *time* and the *circumſtances* in which ſo great a diſcovery was made to them; and alſo that we ſhould have perceived the effect which it had upon

upon their minds; at leaſt by ſome change in their manner of ſpeaking concerning him. But nothing of this kind is to be found in the goſpels, in the book of Acts, or in any of the epiſtles. We perceive marks enow of other new views of things, eſpecially of the call of the gentiles to partake of the privileges of the goſpel; and we hear much of the diſputes and the eager contention which it occaſioned. But how much more muſt all their prejudices have been ſhocked by the information that the perſon whom they at firſt took to be *a mere man* was not a man, but either God himſelf, or the maker of the world under God? Maxim 13. L. p. 55.

4. All the jewiſh chriſtians, after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which was immediately after the age of the apoſtles, are ſaid to have been *Ebionites*; and theſe were only of two ſorts, ſome of them holding the miraculous conception of our Saviour, and others believing that he was the ſon of Joſeph as well as of Mary. None of them are ſaid to have believed either that he was God, or the maker of the world under God. And is it at all credible that the body of the jewiſh chriſtians, if they had ever been inſtructed by the apoſtles in the doctrine of the divinity or pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, would ſo ſoon, and ſo generally, if not univerſally, have abandoned that faith? Maxim 6. H. p. 7. R. p. 3: L. p. 14.

5. Had

5. Had Chriſt been conſidered as God, or the maker of the world under God, in the early ages of the church, he would naturally have been the proper object of prayer to chriſtians; nay, more ſo than God the Father, with whom, on the ſcheme of the doctrine of the trinity, they muſt have known that they had leſs immediate intercourſe. But prayers to Jeſus Chriſt were not uſed in early times, but gained ground gradually, with the opinion of Chriſt being God, and the object of worſhip. Maxim 14. L. p. 18.

6. Athanaſius repreſents the apoſtles as obliged to uſe great caution not to offend their firſt converts with the doctrine of Chriſt's divinity, and as forbearing to urge that topic till they were firſt well eſtabliſhed in the belief of his being the Meſſiah. He adds, that the jews, being in an error on this ſubject, drew the gentiles into it. Chryſoſtom, and the chriſtian fathers in general, agree with Athanaſius in this repreſentation of the ſilence of the apoſtles in their firſt preaching, both with reſpect to the divinity of Chriſt and his miraculous conception. They repreſent them as leaving their diſciples to learn the doctrine of Chriſt's divinity, by way of *inference* from certain expreſſions; and they do not pretend to produce any inſtance in which they taught that doctrine clearly and explicitly. Maxim 13. H. p. 12. L. p. 37. 53.

7. Hegeſippus, the firſt chriſtian hiſtorian, himſelf

ſelf a jew, and therefore probably an Ebionite, enumerating the hereſies of his time, mentions ſeveral of the gnoſtic kind, but not that of Chriſt being a mere man. He moreover ſays, that in travelling to Rome, where he arrived in the time of Anicetus, he found that all the churches he viſited held the faith which had been taught by Chriſt and the apoſtles, which, in his opinion, was probably that of Chriſt being not God, but man only. Juſtin Martyr alſo, and Clemens Alexandrinus, who wrote after Hegeſippus, treat largely of hereſies in general, without mentioning, or alluding to, the unitarians. Maxim 8. H. p. 8. R. p. 8.

8. All thoſe who were deemed *heretics* in early times were cut off from the communion of thoſe who called themſelves the *orthodox* chriſtians, and went by ſome particular name; generally that of their leader. But the unitarians among the gentiles were not expelled from the aſſemblies of chriſtians, but worſhipped along with thoſe who were called orthodox, and had no particular name till the time of Victor, who excommunicated Theodotus; and a long time after that Epiphanius endeavoured to give them the name of Alogi. And though the Ebionites, probably about or before this time, had been excommunicated by the gentile chriſtians, it was, as Jerom ſays, *only* on account of their rigid adherence

adherence to the law of Moſes. Maxim 5. H. p. 14. L. p. 25.

9. The *Apoſtles creed* is that which was taught to all catechumens before baptiſm, and additions were made to it from time to time, in order to exclude thoſe who were denominated *heretics*. Now though there are ſeveral articles in that creed which allude to the gnoſtics, and tacitly condemn them, there was not, in the time of Tertullian, any article in it that alluded to the unitarians; ſo that even then any unitarian, at leaſt one believing the miraculous conception, might have ſubſcribed it. It may, therefore, be concluded, that ſimple unitarianiſm was not deemed heretical at the end of the ſecond century. Maxim 7. L. p. 27.

10. It is acknowledged by Euſebius and others, that the ancient unitarians themſelves conſtantly aſſerted that their doctrine was the prevailing opinion of the chriſtian church till the time of Victor. Maxim 2. H. p. 18. R. p. 25.

11. Juſtin Martyr, who maintains the pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, is ſo far from calling the contrary opinion a *hereſy*, that what he ſays on the ſubject is evidently an apology for his own; and when he ſpeaks of *heretics in general*, which he does with great indignation, as no chriſtians, and having no communication with chriſtians, he mentions the gnoſtics only. Maxim 12. H. p. 17. R. p. 15. L. p. 127.

12. Irenæus,

12. Irenæus, who was after Juſtin, and who wrote a large treatiſe on the ſubject of hereſy, ſays very little concerning the Ebionites, and he never calls them *heretics.* Thoſe Ebionites he ſpeaks of as believing that Chriſt was the ſon of Joſeph, and he makes no mention of thoſe who believed the miraculous conception. Maxim 12. H. p. 15. L. p. 32. 118.

13. Tertullian repreſents the majority of the common or unlearned chriſtians, the *Idiotæ*, as unitarians; and it is among the common people that we always find the oldeſt opinions in any country, and in any ſect, while the learned are moſt apt to innovate. It may therefore be preſumed, that as the unitarian doctrine was held by the common people in the time of Tertullian, it had been more general ſtill before that time, and probably univerſal in the apoſtolical age. Athanaſius alſo mentions it as a ſubject of complaint to the orthodox of his age, that *the many*, and eſpecially perſons of *low underſtandings*, were inclined to the unitarian doctrine. Maxim 4. 10. R. p. 26. L. p. 49.

14. The firſt who held and diſcuſſed the doctrine of the pre-exiſtence and divinity of Chriſt acknowledge that their opinions were exceedingly unpopular among the unlearned chriſtians; that theſe dreaded the doctrine of the trinity, thinking that it infringed upon the doctrine of the ſupremacy of God the Father; and the learned chriſtians made

frequent apologies to them, and to others, for their own opinion. Maxim 10. H. p. 54.

15. The divinity of Chriſt was firſt advanced and urged by thoſe who had been heathen philoſophers, and eſpecially thoſe who were admirers of the doctrine of Plato, who held the opinion of a ſecond God. Auſtin ſays, that he conſidered Chriſt as no other than a moſt excellent man, and that he had no ſuſpicion of God being incarnate in him, or how "the catholic faith differed from the "the error of Photinus" (one of the laſt of the proper unitarians whoſe name is come down to us) 'till he read the books of Plato; and that he was afterwards confirmed in the catholic doctrine by reading the ſcriptures. Conſtantine, in his oration to the fathers of the council of Nice, ſpeaks with commendation of Plato, as having taught the doctrine of "a ſecond God, derived from the ſupreme "God, and ſubſervient to his will." Maxim 11. H. p. 20.

16. There is a pretty eaſy gradation in the progreſs of the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt; as he was firſt thought to be God in ſome qualified ſenſe of the word, a diſtinguiſhed emanation from the ſupreme mind, and then the logos or the wiſdom of God perſonified; and this *logos* was firſt thought to be only occaſionally detached from the deity, and then drawn into his eſſence again, before it was imagined to have a *permanent perſonality*,

perſonality, diſtinct from that of the ſource from which it ſprang. And it was not 'till 400 years after that time that Chriſt was thought to be properly equal to the Father. Whereas, on the other hand, though it is now pretended that the apoſtles taught the doctrine of the divinity of Chriſt, yet it cannot be denied that, in the very times of the apoſtles, the jewiſh church, and many of the gentiles alſo, held the opinion of his being a mere man. Here the tranſition is quite ſudden, without any gradation at all. This muſt naturally have given the greateſt alarm, ſuch as is now given to thoſe who are called orthodox, by the preſent Socinians; and yet nothing of this kind can be perceived. Beſides, it is certainly moſt probable that the chriſtians of thoſe times, urged as they were with the meanneſs of their maſter, ſhould incline to *add to*, rather than *take from*, his natural rank and dignity. Maxim 9. H. p. 20. &c. L. p. 73. 134.

V. *Maxims of Hiſtorical Criticiſm, by which the preceding Articles may be tried.*

1. WHEN two perſons give different accounts of things, that evidence is to be preferred, which is either in itſelf more probable, or more agreeable to other credible teſtimony.

2. Neither is entire credit to be given to any ſet of men with reſpect to what is reputable to them, nor to their enemies with reſpect to what is diſre-

putable; but the account given by the one may be balanced by that of the other. Summary View, No. 10.

3. Accounts of any ſet of men given by their enemies only are always ſuſpicious. But the confeſſions of enemies, and circumſtances favourable to any body of men, collected from the writings of their adverſaries, are deſerving of particular regard.

4. It is natural for men who wiſh to ſpeak diſparagingly of any ſect to undervalue their numbers, as well as every thing elſe relating to them; and it is equally natural for thoſe who wiſh to ſpeak reſpectfully of any party, to repreſent the members of it as more numerous than they are. Summary View, No. 13.

5. When perſons form themſelves into ſocieties, ſo as to be diſtinguiſhable from others, they never fail to get ſome *particular name*, either aſſumed by themſelves, or impoſed by others. This is neceſſary, in order to make them the ſubject of converſation, long periphraſes in diſcourſe being very inconvenient. Summary View, No. 8.

6. When particular opinions are aſcribed to a particular claſs of men, without any diſtinction of the time when thoſe opinions were adopted by them, it may be preſumed, that they were ſuppoſed to hold thoſe opinions from the time that they received

received their denomination. Summary View, No. 4.

7. When a particular deſcription is given of a claſs of perſons within any period of time, any perſon who can be proved to have had the proper character of one of that claſs may be deemed to have belonged to it, and to have enjoyed all the privileges of it, whatever they were. Summary View. No. 9.

8. When an hiſtorian, or writer of any kind, profeſſedly enumerates the ſeveral *ſpecies* belonging to any *genus*, or general body of men, and omits any particular ſpecies or denomination, which, if it had belonged to the genus, he, from his ſituation and circumſtances, was not likely to have overlooked, it may be preſumed that he did not conſider that particular ſpecies as belonging to the genus. Summary View, No. 7.

9. Great changes in opinion are not uſually made of a ſudden, and never by great bodies of men. That hiſtory, therefore, which repreſents ſuch changes as having been made gradually, and by eaſy ſteps, is always the more probable on that account. Summary View, No. 16.

10. The common or unlearned people, in any country, who do not ſpeculate much, retain longeſt any opinions with which their minds have been much impreſſed; and therefore we always look for the oldeſt opinions in any country, or any claſs of

men, among the common people, and not among the learned. Summary View, No. 13, 14.

11. If any new opinions be introduced into a ſociety, they are moſt likely to have introduced them who held opinions ſimilar to them before they joined that ſociety. Summary V. No. 15.

12. If any particular opinion has never failed to excite great indignation in all ages and nations, in which a contrary opinion has been generally received, and that particular opinion can be proved to have exiſted in any age or country when it did not excite indignation, it may be concluded that it had many partizans in that age or country. For the opinion being the ſame, it could not of itſelf be more reſpectable; and human nature being the ſame, it could not but have been regarded in the ſame light, ſo long as the ſame ſtreſs was laid on the oppoſite opinion. Summary View, No. 1. 11, 12.

13. When a time is given, in which any very remarkable and intereſting opinion was not believed by a certain claſs of people, and another time in which the belief of it was general, the introduction of ſuch an opinion may always be known by the effects which it will produce upon the minds, and in the conduct of men; by the alarm which it will give to ſome, and the defence of it by others. If, therefore, no alarm was given, and no defence of it

it was made, within any particular period, it may be concluded that the introduction of it did not take place within that period. Summary View, No. 2, 3. 6.

14. When any particular opinion or practice, is neceſſarily or cuſtomarily accompanied by any other opinion or practice; if the latter be not found within any particular period, it may be preſumed that the former did not exiſt within that period. Summary View, No. 5.

It will be perceived that the whole of this hiſtorical evidence is in favour of the proper unitarian doctrine (or that of Chriſt being a mere man) having been the faith of the primitive church, in oppoſition to the arian no leſs than the trinitarian hypotheſis.

As to the arian hypotheſis in particular, I do not know that it can be traced any higher than Arius himſelf, or at leaſt the age in which he lived. Both the gnoſtics and the platonizing chriſtians were equally far from ſuppoſing that Chriſt was a being *created out of nothing*; the former having thought him to be an emanation from the ſupreme being, and the latter the logos of the Father perſonified. And though they ſometimes applied the term *creation* to this *perſonification*, ſtill they did not ſuppoſe it to have been a creation out of nothing. It was only a new modification of what exiſted before. For God, they ſaid, was always *rational* (λογικος) or

had within him that principle which afterwards aſſumed a perſonal character.

Beſides, all the chriſtian fathers, before the time of Arius, ſuppoſed that Chriſt had a human ſoul as well as a human body, which no arians ever admitted; they holding that the *logos* ſupplied the place of one in Chriſt.

Upon the whole, the arian hypotheſis appears to me to be deſtitute of all ſupport from chriſtian antiquity. Whereas it was never denied that the proper unitarian doctrine exiſted in the time of the apoſtles; and I think it evident that it was the faith of the bulk of chriſtians, and eſpecially the unlearned chriſtians, for two or three centuries after Chriſt.

To the preface to the account of the trial of Mr Elwall in p. 59, 60, *Dr. Prieſtley in* 1788 *made the following addition.*

SINCE the writing of the above the editor has had the pleaſure of knowing many of Mr. Elwall's acquaintance, and particularly Mr. John Martin, of Skilts-Park, between Birmingham and Alceſter, who was preſent at the trial. He is now in his eighty-fourth year, and perfectly remembers that it was in 1726, and he thinks it was the ſummer-aſſizes, becauſe the weather was very hot. The reputation of the trial drew many perſons to hear it, and himſelf among the reſt; and being acquainted with ſome of the ſheriff's men he got a very convenient ſtation, at about an equal diſtance from the judge on his left-hand, and Mr. Elwall on his right, where he ſaw and heard to the greateſt advantage. The trial, he ſays, was in the morning, and the figure of Mr. Elwall, who was a tall man, with white hair, a large beard and flowing garments, ſtruck every body with reſpect. He ſpake about an hour with great gravity, fluency and preſence of mind, but what is printed is the ſubſtance of what he ſaid. The judge gave the moſt obliging attention to him, and the confuſion of the clergy, when he pauſed and waited for their anſwer, as mentioned in the trial, was very viſible. During the trial, Mr. Martin ſays he was ſtruck with the reſemblance of

it to that of Paul. He does not recollect that the jury brought in any verdict, but the judge ſaid he was at liberty to go where he pleaſed. It is poſſible that the trial might not come to a regular termination, on account of Mr Elwall not having had a copy of the indictment, as mentioned in this account.

F I N I S.

TRACTS.

II.

TRACTS.

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A

FRIENDLY DIALOGUE:

BETWEEN

A COMMON UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN,

AND

AN ATHANASIAN;

Occaſioned by the former's behaviour during ſome part of the public ſervice.

OR,

AN ATTEMPT TO RESTORE SCRIPTURE FORMS OF WORSHIP.

To which is added

A SECOND DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

EUGENIUS AND THEOPHILUS,

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

Jeſus anſwered; the firſt of all the commandments is, Hear, O Iſrael! the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength. This is the firſt commandment. And the ſecond is like, namely this: Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. There is none other commandment greater than theſe.
MARK xii. 29, 30, 31.

When ye pray, ſay, Our Father, &c. LUKE xi. 2.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following little tract (viz. the firſt of the two following dialogues) being now reprinted by the editor, with very conſiderable alterations, it is no more than juſtice to the author to ſay, that he is no longer anſwerable for the contents of it. His learning, and his chriſtian ſpirit and temper, deſerve all praiſe; his name is not mentioned, but his works will follow him.

January 1ſt,
1784.

[Reprinted from the ſecond edition, 1787.]

PREFACE.

THE following Dialogue is deſigned for the uſe of common chriſtians, who, by experience, are found competent judges of the doctrine here contended for, when it is delivered in its native ſimplicity, as it was firſt preached by Chriſt and his apoſtles. Plain ſcripture-facts are adapted to all capacities, and cannot be overthrown by all the learned ſophiſtry in the world. It is to be hoped, that there are amongſt us many rational chriſtians, who will diſtribute ſuch little tracts, in order to help forward the glorious work of another reformation, which, though the times are favourable in many reſpects, is very much obſtructed by irreligion on one ſide, and ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm on the other.

PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

THE unexpected demand which has been made for the former impreſſion of the firſt Dialogue, has given occaſion for the re-publication of it. A ſecond is now added to the preſent edition; and, in this laſt diſcuſſion of the ſubject, the author has conducted his two friends to a perfect agreement in opinion and practice, upon principles which appeared, in the end, equally concluſive to both of them.

The firſt dialogue was re-printed in Philadelphia, in 1785; a circumſtance which affords ſome hopes that it may be uſeful on the other ſide of the Atlantic: and more particularly as the wiſdom of the American ſtates hath not impoſed thoſe impediments to the free progreſs of the true faith of the goſpel of Chriſt, which have been unhappily adopted and retained in Europe.

The writer has only to add, that his fervent prayer to God is, that in proportion as the knowledge of the truth ſhall ſpread, the greater purity of life and conſiſtency of conduct may prevail throughout the chriſtian world.

October 15,
1787.

JOHN DISNEY.

A

FRIENDLY DIALOGUE.

ATHANASIAN. Neighbour, as I always thought you a perſon of a ſerious turn of mind, and have frequently obſerved your exemplary conduct in the public worſhip, your behaviour this day, at church, gave me great ſurpriſe, and indeed uneaſineſs, becauſe you ſeemed to treat ſome parts of our excellent liturgy with diſregard. You uſed to repeat, after the miniſter, the four firſt petitions of the litany, in a devout and ſolemn manner; and to join in every part of our liturgy, ſo juſtly celebrated by great numbers of pious and learned men. But I took notice this day, at church, you put on a ſilent indifference, when GOD THE SON, GOD THE HOLY GHOST, and the THREE PERSONS in the trinity were invoked; neither did you ſeem to give your aſſent to the doxology, ſo frequently directed, to FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. You ſeemed likewiſe not to join in the latter end of thoſe prayers, which conclude with the doctrine of the

trinity in unity, ſo plainly and ſolemnly eſtabliſhed by our glorious church, and confirmed by the learned pains of many excellent writers. I ſhould be glad to know the true reaſon of this ſurpriſing change; and make no doubt but you will readily explain yourſelf upon theſe religious points, as you and I have had frequent conferences upon ſubjects of ſcripture.

UNITARIAN. Why, really, neighbour, I acknowledge the juſtneſs of your charge. As my ſentiments are very different from thoſe I formerly embraced, and was educated in; ſo I think it my duty to act conſiſtently with my principles, and to profeſs and practiſe, in religious matters, according to the dictates of my conſcience. There was a little book, publiſhed ſome years ago, under the title of, AN APPEAL TO THE COMMON SENSE OF ALL CHRISTIAN PEOPLE, &c. written by a *country clergyman.* And ſince then, another ſmall tract entitled, AN APPEAL TO THE SERIOUS AND CANDID PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIANITY*: theſe I have carefully

* The third and laſt edition of the *Appeal to common ſenſe,* by the late Rev. William Hopkins, vicar of Bolney, in Suſſex, was publiſhed 1775, by Mr. Johnſon, in St. Paul's-church-yard. Mr. Hopkins died in April, 1786, in the 80th year of his age, and ſome memoirs of his life and writings, (by the editor of this treatiſe,)

fully read, conſidered, and compared with ſcripture, and more particularly with regard to the article of religious worſhip, which is of a practical nature; and profeſs myſelf deeply convinced, by the expreſs determination of Chriſt and his apoſtles, that the church-worſhip offered up to Jeſus Chriſt, the meſſenger of God, and to the holy ſpirit; and to the trinity, as being three perſons, and one God, is falſe and unſcriptural, from whence, I think, it neceſſarily follows, that the famous athanaſian doctrine of three co-equal perſons in one God, has no foundation in the word of God.

ATHANASIAN. Oh, my friend! you aſtoniſh me by ſuch a bold declaration; and I beg of you, for the ſake of your future happineſs, to take heed, and beware how you run into a dangerous hereſy, before you have weighed this important buſineſs with a cool and unprejudiced mind. What! is it poſſible to imagine that ſo many wiſe and good men ſhould have been ſo grievouſly miſtaken, as to be guilty of falſe worſhip in their ſolemn addreſs to almighty God? Don't you know, that our liturgy was

treatiſe,) were the next year prefixed to the remaining copies of his *Appeal*. For an account of the original publication of this firſt dialogue, ſee pp. xiv. and xv. of the memoirs.—The *Appeal to the profeſſors of chriſtianity*, and the tracts connected with it, are alſo ſold by J. Johnſon in St. Paul's church-yard.

was compiled by pious and learned men; and that it has been celebrated by ſeveral excellent writers, as the moſt perfect and chriſtian form of public devotion in the whole chriſtian world? You ſhould, therefore, ſuſpect, that theſe authors have impoſed on your judgment by ſome deluſive arts, when their arguments have a tendency to draw you off from an important part of religious worſhip, ſettled and determined by the venerable fathers of the church of England, eſtabliſhed by acts of parliament and convocation, and ſtrongly enforced by a pious and learned clergy.

UNITARIAN. I am obliged to you, my good friend, for your advice, as I am well aſſured it proceeds from a kind regard for my ſpiritual welfare. But I can ſeriouſly declare, that my conviction has not been haſty: in the courſe of my inquiry, I made all poſſible objections to the doctrines delivered in both theſe APPEALS, for the very reaſon you aſſign; and I thought it ſtrange and unaccountable, that ſuch an excellent church ſhould have continued ſo long in an error that breaks in upon the true character of the one God and Father of all, and the holy and only worſhip admitted, practiſed, and directed by Chriſt and his apoſtles. And, in order to convince you of my ſincerity in this grand affair, I muſt acquaint you that I ſent for ſeveral anſwers to theſe publications, which have been written by learned perſons; and have alſo carefully examined ſome defences of them.

Upon

Upon the moſt ſincere and impartial inquiry, not without earneſt applications to the God of truth, for the direction of his holy ſpirit in my religious diſquiſitions, I profeſs myſelf an UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN, or a firm believer in one ſupreme God and Father of all, as a principle of natural as well as revealed religion. I ſee with my own eyes, and perceive with my own underſtanding, that it is my duty to worſhip and pray to the one God and Father of all, in the name of, or as the diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt, for the aſſiſtance of his holy ſpirit and guidance; and think it lawful to offer up petitions to none other, except the inviſible and ſelf-exiſtent creator and governor of the world, the one only living and true God. As our lord commanded no worſhip or prayer to be made to himſelf, and directed his apoſtles and others, to pray only to God, our Father, who is in heaven; and they taught their diſciples the ſame: ſurely, to pay religious worſhip to any other, muſt be judged, by every unprejudiced chriſtian, as an inſtance of will-worſhip, not warranted by the word of God; and, conſequently, ſuch unſcriptural forms of devotion ought to be laid aſide, though eſtabliſhed by the authority of wiſe and learned men. With reſpect to the worſhip of the trinity in unity, or three perſons and one God, not even the leaſt colour of evidence can be produced for it; every form of worſhip ſet forth by Chriſt and his apoſtles is abſolutely inconſiſtent with it. It is certainly worſhipping God under

under a falſe character, or *we know not what*, (John iv. 22.) when we offer up prayers to a Being, conſiſting of three co-equal perſons, contrary to the light of reaſon and ſcripture; and I am afraid this religious practice too nearly approaches to the crime of ſome degree of idolatry, as no ſuch being exiſts in the univerſe.

ATHANASIAN. Surely you muſt labour under ſome very great miſtake, when you make ſuch confident declarations regarding forms of worſhip, that have been deduced from ſcripture by ſo many learned men; and have been defended in ſo many excellent books, written by perſons of almoſt every denomination of chriſtians, as well as of the church of England. Have you, my friend, carefully examined every part of ſcripture relating to religious worſhip? Have not the authors of theſe APPEALS concealed ſome conſiderable evidence, in order to gain their cauſe? Though my memory, at preſent, does not furniſh me with any particular paſſages, where the ſecond, third, and fourth petitions of the litany are found in expreſs terms; yet I am perſuaded that theſe forms of worſhip are warranted by ſcripture, as our church, which profeſſes the higheſt regard for ſcripture, and is founded upon it, has ſo long recommended and enforced the whole litany-worſhip: and you muſt allow that the church of England has been bleſſed with many excellent members, remarkable for their piety, as well as learning; and, conſequently, I cannot think

hink of departing from their religious ſentiments, without the cleareſt and ſtrongeſt evidence, drawn from the word of God.

UNITARIAN. We of this nation ought to bleſs God for the ineſtimable advantages of the free uſe of the holy ſcriptures in the vulgar tongue. In the name of God, let every declaration of Chriſt and his apoſtles, relating to religious worſhip, be examined and conſidered with the greateſt care; and let this important cauſe be determined by divine and not human authority. I can ſincerely tell you a plain matter of fact, that after having very accurately compared the new Teſtament, with the collection of texts relating to religious worſhip in both theſe APPEALS, I could not find one paſſage omitted; ſo that the authors of them cannot be charged with concealing any part of the evidence, in order to gain their cauſe, according to the too common practice of party writers.

My good friend, do but admit, as your proteſtant profeſſion, and your ſeeming regard for ſcripture requires, that the authority of Chriſt and his apoſtles is of greater weight than the decrees of even wiſe and learned men, and you will ſoon be convinced that the athanaſian, or trinitarian worſhip is falſe and unſcriptural. I will endeavour to point out to you a plain method of gaining intire ſatisfaction upon this important ſubject.—*It came to paſs that as he* (viz. Chriſt) *was praying in a certain place, one of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord teach us to pray, as John*

as taught his diſciples. (Luke xi. 1.) Now, the grand queſtion is, what anſwer our lord made to this reaſonable inquiry? For ſurely it is the duty of every chriſtian to pay a very ſolemn regard to the determination of Chriſt himſelf.—*And he* (viz. Chriſt) *ſaid unto them, when ye pray, ſay, Our Father, who art in heaven*; &c. (v. 2.) This is exactly agreeable to the precept he gave in his ſermon on the mount; *after this manner pray ye: Our Father, who art in heaven*, &c. (Mark vi. 9.) It appears then, that our Lord has plainly commanded all his diſciples to worſhip the one God and Father of all, without any mention of himſelf, or of the holy ſpirit of God, as objects of worſhip.

ATHANASIAN. Your producing the lord's prayer is, I think, unneceſſary, as all chriſtians are uniformly agreed in it; and this prayer frequently occurs in every part of our public ſervice.

UNITARIAN. But it is proper to begin with a point univerſally agreed upon, in order to proceed in a regular manner, to the examination of thoſe points wherein we differ. Though the lord's prayer is ſo familiar to you, by frequent uſe, yet it is very poſſible that you, and thouſands of others, might not have attended to the conſequences, naturally ariſing from this divine and comprehenſive prayer.

In the next place, I recommend to your ſerious conſideration, part of a diſcourſe our lord delivered to his diſciples, juſt before he was going to ſuffer a

painful

ainful and ſcandalous death.—*In that day ye ſhall aſk ne nothing: Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, whatſoever e ſhall aſk the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye aſked nothing in my name. At that lay ye ſhall aſk in my name.* (John xv. 23, 24, 26). Be pleaſed to take particular notice, that our lord iath, in theſe declarations, plainly ſet forth the true hriſtian form of worſhip, which is no other than to worſhip the one God and Father of all, in the name, and as the diſciples, of Jeſus Chriſt.

But here I muſt earneſtly deſire you to conſider, what foundation there is for the worſhip of Jeſus Chriſt, or the holy ſpirit of God, or three perſons in one God. 'Tis impoſſible for the art of man to find it out, in theſe plain declarations of our lord, when he was profeſſedly ſpeaking of the duty of his diſciples, with regard to the true object of religious worſhip.

ATHANASIAN. I freely grant you that the church-worſhip does not appear in this diſcourſe of Chriſt. But does he not promiſe his diſciples to ſend the holy ſpirit to guide them into all truth? From whence it is not improbable that ſome particulars were to be revealed to them after the deſcent of the holy ſpirit, which our lord did not think proper to communicate to them in perſon; ſo that if the church-worſhip be rightly deduced from the declarations of the inſpired apoſtles, it will yet ſtand upon a ſcripture-foundation.

UNITARIAN. Let us, for the preſent, confine our argument to our lord's laſt diſcourſe to his diſciples. If the true character of God be, a Being conſiſting of three co-equal perſons, and it be our duty to worſhip him under this character, is it poſſible to imagine, that our Lord ſhould take no notice of ſuch an eſſential part of our religious ſervice? As no ſuch worſhip can be deduced from this, or any other diſcourſe of our lord, it muſt certainly be given up, as falſe and unſcriptural, unleſs the apoſtles, after the deſcent of the holy ſpirit, have made it our expreſs duty, by clear precepts and example.

But the matter of fact is demonſtrated, even to the eye-ſight, that the apoſtles offered up their uſual and ſtated devotions to God only, through Jeſus Chriſt. *They lift up their voice to God, ſaying, Lord, thou art God,—grant that—wonders may be done by the name of thy holy ſervant Jeſus.* (Acts iv. 24, 30.) *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our lord Jeſus Chriſt.* (1 Cor. xv. 57.) The precepts relating to worſhip, in the epiſtles, are to this effect—*Whatſoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him.* (Coloſſ. iii. 17.) In the review of *all* the forms of worſhip in the new Teſtament, will appear demonſtrative evidence that the worſhip of Chriſt, and the holy ſpirit, is no where warranted by the practice or precepts of the apoſtles: and ſo groſs and abſurd is the

worſhip

worſhip of three perſons and one God, that they have not left us the moſt diſtant intimation of any ſuch religious practice; which you will readily perceive, when you have carefully examined all their declarations relating to the duty of worſhip. If it had been the will of God, that the diſciples of Chriſt ſhould have worſhipped one God, under the character of three perſons, it would have been as plainly ſet forth in the new Teſtament, as it is in the liturgy of the church of England: and conſequently, the athanaſian forms of worſhip muſt appear, to all ſincere Bereans, falſe and unſcriptural, as being deſtitute of all ſupport from the directions of Chriſt and his apoſtles.

ATHANASIAN. But ſurely the great power and authority of Chriſt, who is ſo frequently joined together with the Father, as alſo the high offices which the holy ſpirit ſuſtains; and both of them being ſometimes mentioned, together with the Father, as concerned in the great work of our ſalvation, afford good grounds for the direct invocation of them in prayer or praiſe; particularly, as we are commanded to be baptized into the name of the ſon and holy ſpirit, as well as of the Father. (Mat. xxviii. 19.) And the apoſtolical benediction (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) ſeems to imply worſhip to the ſon and holy ſpirit.

UNITARIAN. That the ſon is employed by God in very high offices for the ſalvation of mankind, every chriſtian muſt readily grant, with joy and gratitude: and the promiſed aſſiſtance of the holy

ſpirit is alſo deſerving of our thankfulneſs. As almighty God empowered Chriſt to preach and make known the terms of ſalvation to the world; ſo after he had compleated the gracious work aſſigned him, he received a commiſſion to ſend down the holy ſpirit upon the apoſtles, to enable them to propagate the goſpel through the world: the comfortable aſſiſtance of the ſame holy ſpirit of God, (that is, his guidance and protection) is likewiſe promiſed to all ſincere chriſtians in the diſcharge of their moſt difficult duties. Upon this account, the diſciples of Chriſt are commanded to be baptized into the name of the ſon and holy ſpirit, as well as of the Father. To be baptized into the name of the holy ſpirit, or into the belief of the extraordinary guidance and direction of the holy ſpirit, which was given to the apoſtles, cannot be of the like import, with addreſſing ourſelves to the ſame in prayer and praiſe. When this famous text in Matthew's goſpel is cited, the words immediately foregoing ſhould always be added, as being neceſſary to complete the ſenſe: *all power*, (that is, all power relating to the goſpel-diſpenſation,) *is given unto me in heaven, and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the ſon, and of the holy ſpirit:* (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.) and conſequently, the Father is mentioned as the giver of that power, the ſon as the perſon to whom that power is given, and the holy ſpirit, as the bleſſing of God, accompanying our endeavours, and the

effectual

effectual means of our ſupporting our chriſtian warfare. This power, of which Chriſt ſpeaks, is that which he, in other words, calls the holy ſpirit; and, therefore, the Father is mentioned as the giver of that power, and the ſon as the perſon to whom it is given. This ſeems to be the true ſcriptural account of this paſſage, about which there have been ſo many angry diſputes, but concerning which you, and every one, muſt judge for himſelf.

The other text you mention, (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) is no more than a ſolemn wiſh of the apoſtle Paul, that the favour of Chriſt, the love of God, and the communion of the holy ſpirit, or joint partaking in the divine aſſiſtance, might be and continue with the Corinthians. But I refer you to every thing relating to this text, fairly diſcuſſed in the APPEALS before mentioned.

As to any doxology, or the aſcribing of glory to the perſon of the holy ſpirit, it is not even pretended, by learned men, that one inſtance of it can be produced from ſcripture. The new Teſtament lies open before you, and you may ſee with your own eyes, whether the common church-doxology be there or not,—*Glory be to the Father, and to the ſon, and to the holy ghoſt.* The ſcripure-doxologies are to this effect: *Glory to God through Jeſus Chriſt.—Bleſſing, &c. be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne,* (viz. the one ſupreme God) *and unto the lamb,* (that is, God's holy and innocent creature, and great inſtrument employed

by him, for the ſalvation of mankind,) *for ever and ever.* (Rom. xvi. 27. Rev. v. 13.)

Again; with reſpect to the worſhip of Father, ſon, and holy ſpirit, as being one God, it is a notorious fact, not to be overthrown, by all the ſubtle inventions of learned men through the whole chriſtian world, that this form of worſhip is ſo far from being commanded, or authoriſed by the ſacred writers, that the worſhip required in the ſcriptures is abſolutely inconſiſtent with it; the one ſupreme God, who is generally deſcribed by the character of Father, being conſtantly ſet forth, as the only object to whom all religious invocation ſhould be directed. Nothing is more eaſy than for you, or for any other common chriſtian, to determine this plain queſtion, whether the worſhip of three perſons and one God, be in the new Teſtament, which you have in your hands, or whether it be not.

ATHANASIAN. To ſpeak impartially, your obſervations upon this article of religious worſhip appear to me of conſiderable weight. If the matter of fact be as you have repreſented it, (and you very fairly refer me to the ſcripture itſelf, for my complete ſatisfaction,) I ſhall be obliged to give up the athanaſian worſhip, as what cannot be defended by the word of God.

But as worſhip is paid to Chriſt in ſcripture, and glory is expreſsly aſcribed to him, is not this a very

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ſtrong and concluſive argument, that Chriſt is equally divine, or one God, with the Father?

UNITARIAN. My good friend, as you begin to ſee ſome light and evidence, which you had not obſerved before, I ſhall take a particular pleaſure in employing my beſt endeavours to give you every poſſible ſatisfaction upon this important article of religious worſhip. The argument uſually urged, by learned men, to prove Chriſt's ſupreme divinity, is clearly and ſolidly anſwered, by the plain ſcripture account of the honour and worſhip which is to be paid to him, and which ſurely will be found to be very ſhort of *divine* worſhip. From ſcripture then we learn, that we muſt *honour the ſon, becauſe the Father hath committed all judgment unto him*; (John v. 22. 23.) that we muſt *confeſs Chriſt to be lord, to the glory of God the Father*, i. e. acknowledge his high authority from God. (Philip. ii. 10. 11.)

More particularly in the Revelation, (ch. v.) where in an heavenly viſion exhibited before the apoſtle John, our lord is emblematically deſcribed as a lamb, receiving honours and worſhip. Be pleaſed, however, to obſerve, that the ground of theſe honours and worſhip, was not, his being God, equal to the Father; was not, becauſe he was employed by God as an inferior inſtrument in the creation of the world; but becauſe he was thought worthy to receive this tribute of bleſſing and praiſe, as a reward for his faithful attachment to the cauſe of God, and his willing

willing ſufferings in confirming the truth of the goſpel, for the benefit of mankind. But this worſhip paid *to* this lamb that was ſlain, (*i. e.* to a creature, and to a mortal creature, capable of dying,) cannot be *divine* worſhip ; the worſhip to be paid to God, cannot be conſtrued into an invocation of the holy Jeſus in prayer; eſpecially when there is no command in the ſcriptures for it, given by Chriſt himſelf, or, by almighty God: but it muſt be, that worſhip, reverence, and reſpect which we pay to fellow-creatures, our ſuperiors in worth and excellence; worſhip proportionate to the highly virtuous and pious character of the bleſſed Jeſus, and his benevolence towards us, whenever we think or ſpeak of him ; but not to make him almighty God by praying to him.

ATHANASIAN. My good friend, it does not become a ſincere chriſtian to withſtand the evidence you have, I think, fairly produced from the word of God. The objection I made, is ſatisfactorily anſwered, more eſpecially that in the fifth chapter of the Revelation ; and I really wonder at myſelf, and many others, who have not been ſo convinced before.

UNITARIAN. My dear chriſtian friend, we ought to make great allowances for each other's infirmities, miſtakes, and prejudices, naturally ariſing from various cauſes. Nothing is more common in human life, than even for thinking perſons to receive information about things ſeemingly plain and obvious, and which may have eſcaped their notice. But the

readineſs you ſhew to ſubmit to evidence, when fairly laid before you, upon religious ſubjects, proceeds from an excellent temper of mind, which naturally qualifies you to receive the truth, as it is in Jeſus. As you freely grant that the athanaſian forms of worſhip muſt be given up, if the fact be, as I have ſtated it, I am willing to put the whole cauſe upon this ſhort and important iſſue. If, upon inquiry, you can point out, by any one plain inſtance or precept in ſcripture, that it is the duty of chriſtians to worſhip Chriſt and the holy ſpirit, as being each of them God: and three perſons as one God, in prayer, or praiſe: I ſhall then freely acknowledge myſelf to be in a religious error, and ſhall think myſelf obliged to return to the church-worſhip, which I have carefully avoided ſince the time of my conviction. On the other hand, if you cannot point out any ſuch worſhip, in the ſcriptures, you will judge yourſelf obliged, by your own confeſſion, to abhere to ſcripture-forms of worſhip, notwithſtanding the authority of even wiſe and learned men; it being an expreſs duty required of Chriſt's diſciples, to *obey God rather than men.*

Let it be obſerved, that this argument, drawn from the conſideration of the term "worſhip," is adapted to all capacities, and abſolutely demoliſhes the athanaſian doctrine, with reſpect to the worſhip of the holy ſpirit; it being impoſſible to conceive that this holy ſpirit, who is ſuppoſed by the athanaſians to be of equal dignity with God, the Father, ſhould never have

have one prayer directed to him, ſhould have no glory aſcribed to him in the writings of the apoſtles, from whom alone we can receive a faithful account of the chriſtian diſpenſation.

Again; how is it poſſible to imagine that it was the deſign of the ſacred writers, to fix, in the mind of chriſtians, the belief of Father, ſon, and holy ſpirit being three perſons and one God, as they have left us no example of any ſort of worſhip directed to three perſons and one God? If this had been a fundamental doctrine of the goſpel, we ſhould not only have had it plainly and frequently expreſſed, but likewiſe ſolemn prayers and praiſes would have been addreſſed to God, under the character of three coequal perſons; otherwiſe, the apoſtles themſelves have left us in the dark with regard to an eſſential part of chriſtian worſhip. Can it enter into the heart of any ſerious chriſtian to believe in earneſt, that it is neceſſary to ſalvation to conceive of God, as a being conſiſting of three perſons, (as is profanely and abſurdly maintained in the athanaſian creed, which ought to be baniſhed from the ſervice of all chriſtian ſocieties) when the apoſtles themſelves have never made it the duty of chriſtians to offer up prayers and praiſes to God, under the athanaſian character: but in all the examples of worſhip recorded in ſcripture, almighty God is always addreſſed, as one ſupreme intelligent agent, one God and Father of all? This eſſential failure in the athanaſian cauſe has, I find,

driven

driven ſome of its learned defenders into this palpable abſurdity, that when we pray to God, under the character of Father, the word *Father* denotes Father, ſon, and holy ſpirit; which demonſtrates the falſehood of the cauſe they are labouring to ſupport: it being extremely clear from hence, that they cannot produce one inſtance of worſhip to three perſons and one God. Otherwiſe, men of ſenſe and learning would not have recourſe to ſuch an expedient, as hath no other tendency, than to turn the ſcripture into ridicule, and expoſe it to the ſcoffs of profane and ſceptical men.

ATHANASIAN. I freely allow the grand importance of this plain matter of fact, drawn from the article of religious worſhip. But I would juſt take notice of a text, that ſeems to imply the doctrine of a trinity in unity, though no inſtance of worſhip paid to ſuch a being appears in ſcripture. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the word, and the ſpirit; and theſe three are one.* (1 John v. 7.)

UNITARIAN. Ever ſince I became acquainted with this ſubject, it has been matter of ſerious lamentation to me, that common chriſtians have been ſo much impoſed upon by the ſound of this famous text, which, if written by the apoſtle John, is nothing to the purpoſe, the ſenſe of it being evidently this; that theſe three are one, as agreeing in the ſame teſtimony. But it is a matter of fact, well known to the learned, that it is a ſpurious, interpolated text,

and

and has been given up, as ſuch, by ſome athanaſian writers; and conſequently, this text ought not to be read in churches, as the word of God. You may ſee every thing relating to it faithfully repreſented, in Sir Iſaac Newton's *Letter to Mr. Le Clerc*; in the *Defence* of the Appeal to Common Senſe, printed in octavo, 1760, p. 431; and in Mr. Lindſey's *Apology*, p. 98.

ATHANASIAN. Without entering into the merits of this queſtion, for which I am not qualified; if ſome learned profeſſors of the trinity in unity have given up this text, as not written by the apoſtle John*, it muſt be allowed that no ſtreſs ſhould be laid

* Athanaſius himſelf never referred to this text. (Trin. Controverſy reviewed, p. 447.) Eraſmus inſiſted that it was in no ancient manuſcripts, and had never been cited by thoſe fathers, who had diſputed the moſt againſt the arians, as Athanaſius, Cyril, and Hilary, (Jortin's Life of Eraſmus, v. 1. p. 345.) Luther and Bullinger omitted it in their german tranſlations of the bible. (Lindſey's Apology p. 99.) Even "in the firſt engliſh "bibles after the reformation, in the time of Henry "viii. and Edward vi. it was printed in a different cha-"racter, to ſignify its being wanting in the original, "which diſtinction came afterwards to be neglected." (Clarke's Script. Doct. 3d edit. p. 232.) Dr. Wall ſays, "This verſe is in no greek manuſcript, nor was in the "bibles of the ancient chriſtians; nor ever made uſe "of by them in their diſputes with the arians. Mill has

laid upon ſo controverted a paſſage. But after all the conceſſions I have made, regarding the article of worſhip, are there not, in ſcripture, ſeveral high titles

" has ſo defended it, that he who thought it genuine " before, will now conclude it to be interpolated by " ſome latin ſcribe firſt." (Trin. controverſy reviewed, p. 448.) Dr. Bentley in his famous lecture at Cambridge, when he ſtood candidate for the chair of regius profeſſor of divinity, intirely gave up this text, and publicly proved it to be ſpurious. (Hiſt. Memoirs of Dr. Clarke, p. 101.) Dr. Waterland, on being aſked whether Dr. Bentley's arguments did not convince him, replied,—" No, for he was convinced before." Nor does the doctor, I think, ever quote that text as genuine in any of his writings. Which, ſays Whiſton, in ſo zealous and warm a trinitarian, deſerves to be taken notice of as a ſingular inſtance of honeſty and impartiality, (ibid. and Sykes's Connexion, p. 271.) Dr. Sykes " Owns that he vehemently ſuſpects it." (External peace of the church, p. 18.) and elſewhere, that " this text is proved ſpurious, if it be poſſible for " any paſſage to be proved ſo." (Modeſt plea, p. 15.) " Dr. Jortin calls it " A ſpurious text which is ſtill " maintained in bold defiance to the fulleſt and " cleareſt evidence againſt it." (Remarks on E. H. V. iii. p. 100.) Dr. Randolph " has not quoted it in his " vindication of the doctrine of the trinity, in anſwer to " the eſſay on ſpirit, though he has collected the moſt " conſiderable texts that are uſually alledged to prove

titles and attributes aſcribed to the ſon and holy ſpirit, which ſurely have a tendency to induce chriſtians to think them equally divine with the Father?

UNITARIAN. I am perſuaded, that if a perſon who had never heard of the athanaſian doctrine and worſhip, was to read the new Teſtament*, he would be

" the athanaſian doctrine," (Trin. Controverſy reviewed, p. 448.)

Notwithſtanding theſe, and a great number of other teſtimonies, Mr. Travis has addreſſed ſeveral letters to Mr. Gibbon, in defence of the authenticity of this text, ſo lately as 1784.—He has however been very properly and ably reproved in ſome remarks publiſhed in " Commentaries and Eſſays." v. 1. p. 511—539. From whence we may finally conclude, in the words of Dr. Jortin, that " At preſent, this paſſage and all " that relates to it, hath been ſo fully diſcuſſed, that " none, except ſtubborn and perverſe people, pretend " to deny that the *heavenly witneſſes* are an interpolation." (Life of Eraſmus, v. ii. p. 102.)

Mr. Porſon, fellow of Trinity college, Cambridge, has finally proved the ſpurioufneſs of this text, without leaving any probability of any further vindication or reply, in his late very learned and very ſatisfactory *Letters to Mr. Archdeacon* Travis, *in anſwer to his defence of the three heavenly witneſſes*, 8vo. 1790.

* When Job Ben Solomon, the African prince, (who was maſter of the Arabic, and had acquired a competent knowledge

be ſurpriſed to find that ſuch a doctrine and worſhip ever prevailed in the chriſtian world. But, (to give a direct anſwer to your objection, drawn from the high titles and attributes aſcribed to the ſon and holy

 ſpirit)

knowledge of the Engliſh language) was in England. about fifty years ago, and was aſked, after reading the new Teſtament, if he found three Gods there: he replied, "No, NO! ONE GREAT GOD, ONE GREAT "GOOD GOD."

It is alſo obſerved, by one who lived ſeveral years familiarly with the Indians of North America, "The "great article that they ſtick moſt at, is this, they "exclaim againſt the ſuppoſition, that the divine word "was ſhut up for nine months in the womb of a "woman: and ſay, that it is a thing unheard of, "that for the expiation of Adam's ſin, God ſhould "put God to death to ſatisfy himſelf: or that the "peace of the world ſhould be brought about by the "incarnation of God, and his ſhameful death.—They "affirm that reaſon ought not to be controled by any "law, or put under a neceſſity of approving what it "does not comprehend; and, in fine, that what *we* "call an article of faith, is an intoxicating potion to "make reaſon reel and ſtagger out of its way; for as "much as the pretended faith may ſupport lies, as "well as truth, if we underſtand by it a readineſs to "believe, without diving to the bottom of things." La Honton's New Voyage to North America, v. ii. cited in Cardale's True Doctrine of the N.T. 2d. edit. p. 360.

ſpirit) it is no wonder that great things are aſcribed to Chriſt, and to the operation of the ſpirit or power of God, ſince they are frequently concerned in, or connected with, the grand work of man's ſalvation. But, the ſacred writers have taken all imaginable care to ſecure the ſupremacy of the one God and Father of all, when they ſpeak in the higheſt ſtrain of the one mediator, the man Chriſt Jeſus, and the holy ſpirit the comforter. With reſpect to the title of *God*, in ſome few paſſages aſcribed to our bleſſed lord, it is extremely plain, from the old and new Teſtament, that ſuch title is ſometimes uſed in an inferior ſenſe; Moſes, magiſtrates and angels being ſtiled gods, conſiſtently with the acknowledgment of the ſupreme God; and Chriſt himſelf, in his anſwer to the jews, when they charged him with blaſphemy, expreſsly contends for the uſe of the word *God* in an inferior ſenſe. (John x. 34—36.) But, it is ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe, to obſerve in general, that when this, and other high titles and attributes aſcribed to Chriſt, (for the holy ſpirit is never expreſsly ſtiled God, or lord,) are collected together, and preſented to the reader with all poſſible advantage, which is frequently done by athanaſian writers; our lord himſelf, and his apoſtles, have aſſured us, in the moſt ſolemn manner, that he, (viz. Chriſt) RECEIVED his being, high titles, and attributes from God the Father; that God advanced him to high dignity and honour, upon acccunt of his perfect

righteouſneſs,

righteouſneſs, and obedience unto death: (ſee Philip. ii. 8, 9, &c.) and that the whole redounds to the glory of God, the Father.

This plain and ſolemn account effectually overthrows the argument uſually drawn from the moſt pompous recital of our lord's high titles and attributes: it being abſolutely impoſſible that the ſupreme God ſhould have any thing *given* him by any being whatever. For, according to the unanſwerable declaration of the apoſtle Paul; *Who hath firſt* GIVEN *to him* (viz. God,) *and it ſhall be recompenced to him? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be glory for ever.* (Rom. ii. 35, 36.) From whence it follows, with demonſtrative evidence, that Chriſt, who was *given* by almighty God, who *received his all from God*, is a perſon, in his moſt exalted ſtate, inferior to the one ſupreme God and Father of all. And the argument holds ſtill ſtronger with regard to the holy ſpirit; which was beſtowed and ſent from heaven, according to Chriſt's promiſe, and the commiſſion he had received from his God and Father, to furniſh the apoſtles with extraordinary gifts, and to render them qualified for their important work.

Add to this, that there are, in the new Teſtament, about *two hundred and forty* paſſages, wherein Chriſt is declared to be inferior to almighty God. The expreſſions relating to this point are plain and clear, incapable of any other ſenſe, without violence and

 diſtortion.

diſtortion. On the other hand, there is only the ſound of *one* text, which ſeems to ſet forth Chriſt's equality with the Father, and the ſound is intirely owing to a falſe tranſlation; (viz. Philip. ii. 6.) *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God*; the words ſhould be rendered thus; *who being in the form of God*, (i. e. endowed with divine powers) *was not eagerly deſirous to be like unto God*; (i. e. to diſplay thoſe powers.) Be pleaſed to read the eleventh verſe, and then determine, by the principles of common ſenſe, whether a perſon equal to the ſupreme God, can be raiſed to higher dignity than he was before?

Again; what demonſtrates the falſehood of the athanaſian doctrine, beyond a poſſibility of doubt is, that there are about *forty* paſſages, wherein the three perſons of the trinity are mentioned together, who are ſometimes ſtiled the *Father, ſon*, and *holy ſpirit*; or, *the Father, the ſon*, and *the ſpirit*;—*the living God, Chriſt, the ſpirit*; *God, the ſon of God, the holy ſpirit*;—*God, the lord, the ſpirit:* but not one paſſage appears, where the Father, the ſon, and the holy ſpirit, are ſaid to be the one God, as determined by the athanaſian creed. On the other hand, the Father is called *God, the living God*, and ſometimes *the one God*, expreſsly diſtinguiſhed from the ſon and holy ſpirit. You muſt, in this place, either give up the plain declarations of ſcripture, or the athanaſian doctrine, they being, when fairly compared

pared together, abſolutely inconſiſtent with each other.

I will conclude with a plain ſcripture fact, relating to the character of the ſupreme God. There are in the new Teſtament *four hundred and forty one* paſſages, wherein God, the Father, is ſtiled *the one*, or *only God*, or *God* abſolutely by way of eminence and ſupremacy; or God with ſome peculiar high titles, epithets, or attributes. Upon the whole, the ſacred writers have taken all imaginable care to maintain the ſupremacy of the *one God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all*; it proceeding entirely from his boundleſs love and mercy, that our lord was appointed to teach his mind and will to mankind, and that he beſtowed his ſpirit, or extraordinary power, upon him for that purpoſe.

ATHANASIAN. I heartily thank you, my good friend, for the pains you have taken to ſet me right on this important point. I cannot help acknowledging that you proceed in a rational way, and that your arguments ſeem juſtly drawn from ſcripture, interpreted by reaſon. If there be ſuch a number of texts in the new Teſtament, clearly ſetting forth the ſenſe you have contended for, under the three laſt heads of your diſcourſe, the athanaſian cauſe is certainly demoliſhed. Surely it muſt have coſt you a vaſt deal of time and labour to collect ſuch a number of texts, and range them in proper order.

I am

I am determined to give the new Teſtament a ſerious review, and to take particular notice of all thoſe paſſages, that refer to God the father, the ſon, and the holy ſpirit. And if upon ſuch impartial examination, as I ſhall be able to make, I find your facts truly repreſented, and your reaſoning concluſive, I ſhall think it my duty to profeſs my conviction, though it ſhould contradict the practice and ſentiments of wiſe and learned men, whoſe authority, I own, has hitherto had too much influence on my mind.

UNITARIAN. My dear chriſtian friend, your reſolution is wiſe and good. Nothing is of greater conſequence, in the grand buſineſs of religion, than that every perſon, to whom God has given common ſenſe and reaſon, ſhould judge and determine for himſelf, in all points, wherein his duty is concerned. I have the particular ſatisfaction to reflect, that the more carefully you examine the ſubject of our debate, the ſtronger conviction you will receive of the truth of the ſcripture facts, I have faithfully ſet forth. And, as to the reaſoning part, it is certainly founded on the principles of common ſenſe, which is the beſt method of interpreting ſcripture; or for what end was our reaſon given to us? or how can it be better employed, than in exploring the revelation of God?

With reſpect to the authority of wiſe and learned men, and the argument drawn from the eſtabliſhed liturgy;

liturgy; I find, upon inquiry, that many wiſe, learned, and good men; and ſome, whoſe judgment, upon any queſtion, is of more value than that of thouſands, have embraced the unitarian doctrine: and what deſerves particular notice, ſome of them, who had been educated in the uſual athanaſian ſcheme, afterwards profeſſed the right opinion of God, and his holy worſhip, in oppoſition to their worldly intereſt; and even, ſince the reformation, ſuffered impriſonment, baniſhment, and death.

The memory of our firſt reformers, ought, without doubt, to be held in very high eſteem, upon account of what they did and ſuffered, in the glorious work of freeing religion from the foul corruptions of popery: but certain it is, that they did not ſufficiently examine the groſs opinion of three perſons in one God. They too readily took for granted, what had been ſettled and determined by the fathers and councils of the fourth and fifth centuries, after the time of Chriſt; when perſons, acquainted with church-hiſtory, aſſure us, the unity of God, in the plain and literal ſenſe, was firſt corrupted: and that a ſuperſtitious veneration of relicks, and the invocation of ſaints immediately followed the corruption.

To ſpeak my mind freely, it is certainly matter of ſerious lamentation, that ſuch a groſs corruption in the pure religion of the holy Jeſus, and which laid the foundation of the grand apoſtacy, has not been

long

long ago baniſhed from the church of England; which, in the moſt ſolemn manner, profeſſeth the ſcripture as the only rule of faith and practice; and, that nothing ſhould be impoſed on the conſciences of men, but what is warranted by the word of God. It is well known, that this very ſubject was recommended to the conſideration of the moſt eminent perſons in church and ſtate, about eighty years ago, by two very learned and very eminent divines, viz. Mr. Whiſton, in his *Primitive Chriſtianity revived*, and Dr. Clarke, in his *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*. The latter I procured, and was there completely furniſhed with all the texts relating to the doctrine of the trinity, reduced under proper heads: and how any chriſtian can withſtand the evidence ariſing from ſuch a number of texts, (viz. *twelve hundred and fifty-one*,) is to me aſtoniſhing. Again; there was a particular application made to the governing powers in the juſtly famous *Free and Candid Diſquiſitions*, about forty years ago, in an humble, calm, and chriſtian manner, in order to get the liturgy reformed, according to the ſtandard of the ſcripture: but nothing has yet been attempted in that glorious cauſe. And, in the year 1772, application was made to parliament for relief from ſubſcription to human articles of religious faith and doctrine: ſince which, ſeveral of the clergy of the eſtabliſhed church have reſigned their preferments and miniſtry therein, rather than continue to officiate, in the public

public ſervice, againſt their conſciences; while many, many more, remain behind, groaning and oppreſſed by their conformity, being yet unable wholly to withdraw themſelves. Notwithſtanding which, the ſame corrupt forms are ſtill kept up in the midſt of light and knowledge; and, therefore common chriſtians are, with the higheſt reaſon, called upon to examine, judge, determine, profeſs, and proteſt;—to diſregard all public authority, when it ſtands in competition with the expreſs declarations of Chriſt and his apoſtles.

We are daily praying to our heavenly Father, that *his name may be hallowed*, that is, that he may be worſhipped and adored, as the ſupreme and only object of the higheſt reverence and love of all rational creatures; and yet, at the ſame time, we obſtinately continue in ſuch falſe worſhip as eclipſes his ſupreme honour and glory, in expreſs contradiction to his holy word. We are conſtantly interceding with almighty God, for the good eſtate of the catholic church, or, that the church of Chriſt may be univerſal; that it may be ſo guided and governed by his good ſpirit, that all who profeſs and call themſelves chriſtians, may be led into the way of truth; and, at the ſame time, we ſeem determined to hold faſt important errors regarding God and his holy worſhip, notwithſtanding the ſtrongeſt and cleareſt light. Upon ſome occaſions, more eſpecially in one of the collects for Good-Friday, we earneſtly

pray

pray for the converſion of jews, turks, and infidels, and at the end of the very ſame collect, we inconſiſtently keep up a religious practice, that is one of the greateſt obſtacles to their converſion. For it is extremely evident, by all accounts, that neither jews, nor mahometans, who are believers of one ſupreme God, can be converted whilſt they are taught to think, that the doctrine of three perſons in one God, and the worſhip practiſed in conſequence of it, are eſſential parts of the chriſtian religion. This can be deemed little leſs than a ſolemn mockery of the almighty, unleſs we employ our ſincere endeavours to effect whatever we pray for; and, I am afraid, will finally demonſtrate the inſincerity of this church and nation, if no alterations can be obtained from the governing powers.

Since my conviction, I have been naturally led to reflect on the lamentable ſtate of mankind, in almoſt all ages and countries, with reſpect to the knowledge of the one true God. Not a great many years after the flood, whereby the immediate power of the almighty creator was ſo remarkably diſplayed, there was a general revolt of the nations of the earth into a ſtate of groſs idolatry: upon which account, almighty God choſe a particular people, for the glorious purpoſe of keeping up the knowledge and worſhip of himſelf; as this grand principle of all religion, though eſtabliſhed by demonſtrative evidence in the works of creation, would have been certainly loſt, without

without an extraordinary revelation. And even this chosen people, the history of the old Testament faithfully informs us, frequently fell into idolatry, before the Babylonish captivity, and very seldom continued any considerable time in a steady obedience to the Lord their God. And, happy had it been for the christian world, if they themselves had never departed from the plain and fundamental article of all true religion, viz. the unity of God, so frequently inculcated in the scripture. Moses, the jewish lawgiver, delivers this important truth in the most solemn manner. *Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, is one Lord.* (Deut. vi. 4.) And our lord when he was asked by one of the scribes—*which was the first commandment of all?* confirms the same doctrine by his express authority: *Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God, is one Lord.* (Mark xii. 28 and 29.) And that this one God, is the Father only, expressly distinguished from the son and holy spirit, is as plainly and strongly declared by Christ and his disciples as it is possible for words to set it forth. Yet, in opposition to the authority of both, who derived their commission from God, it was determined by fallible and presumptuous mortals, between four and five hundred years after Christ, that there are three supreme Gods, and, at the same time that these three supreme Gods, are one God: and whoever will not believe this gross nonsense, and impious contradiction, is doomed to

eternal torments *. In conſequence of this abſurd doctrine, it was decreed, that it is the duty of chriſtians to worſhip God, under the character of three co-equal perſons, without even the leaſt colour of evidence taken from ſcripture. If this be not ſuch a departure from God and his holy worſhip, as calls aloud for a reformation, I muſt deſpair of underſtanding the plaineſt caſe in matters of religion. But, whether the governing powers will regard their duty in this grand affair, or whether they will not, every particular perſon, who has gained right notions of God and his holy worſhip, is indiſpenſibly obliged to

* The creed of the athanaſian chriſtian is very accurately deſcribed by lord Bacon, one of the wiſeſt and greateſt men this country ever produced. (See his *Works*, 4to. vol. iii. p. 129.) "He believes," ſays his lordſhip, "three to be one and one to be three; a "father not to be older than his ſon; a ſon to be equal "with his father; and one proceeding from both to "be equal to both; as believing three perſons in one "nature; and two natures in one perſon.

"He believes a virgin to be the mother of a ſon; "and that very ſon of hers to be her maker. He be- "lieves *him* to have been ſhut up in a narrow cell, "whom heaven and earth could not contain. He be- "lieves *him* to have been born in time, who was, "and is from everlaſting. He believes *him* to have "been a weak child, and carried in arms, who is al- "mighty; and *him* once to have died who alone has "life and immortality."

to profeſs and practiſe in exact conformity to the ſolemn determination of Chriſt and his apoſtles, without regarding any worldly inconveniences that may ariſe from the rejection of falſe notions and unſcriptural worſhip*. This is an eſſential character of Chriſt's diſciples, and required, as an expreſs condition, by our lord himſelf. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, of him ſhall the ſon of man be aſhamed, when he ſhall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.* (Luke ix. 26.)

But, let it be always remembered, and deeply fixed in our hearts, that right notions of God, and his holy worſhip, were not intended to amuſe our minds with empty ſpeculations; but, to eſtabliſh a rational correſpondence between God and our own minds, that we may be effectually influenced to reduce to practice, the pure and holy laws of Jeſus Chriſt. If we have gained better, and more rational ſentiments of religion than we had before, we are called

 upon

* For forms of public prayer for the uſe of unitarian chriſtians, conſult "*The Book of Common Prayer, reformed,*" uſed in the unitarian chapel in Eſſex-ſtreet, London; and Dr. Prieſtley's very late, and very excellent "*Forms of Prayer and other Offices, for the uſe of unitarian ſocieties*; both printed for J. Johnſon, No. 72, St. Paul's Church-yard. Alſo *Forms of prayer, for the uſe of a congregation of proteſtant diſſenters* in Mancheſter, 1789.

upon, by ſtill ſtronger obligations, to *let our light ſo ſhine before men, that they may glorify our Father, who is in heaven.* Do we ſee by a lively faith, the one ſupreme God, in his real character, as a Being of all poſſible perfection, more eſpecially juſtice, mercy, love, goodneſs, and every valuable excellence that can attract a reaſonable affection? We are then certainly required to love this glorious and amiable Being, with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our ſtrength; to prefer his favour, before every intereſt of this mortal ſtate, as being really better than life itſelf; to raiſe our minds above every corrupt appetite and paſſion; and, to take all poſſible pains to adorn our lives and actions, with the excellent qualifications of piety, righteouſneſs, charity, ſobriety, patience, purity and holineſs, which Chriſt and his apoſtles have ſolemnly inculcated, as the neceſſary terms and conditions of gaining eternal life. On the other hand; very ſevere threatenings, namely, excluſion from the kingdom of a heaven, and a ſtate of great and laſting miſery, are denounced againſt all wilful ſinners, who continue ſuch without ſincere amendment and reformation, demonſtrated by an uniform courſe of univerſal righteouſneſs, to the end of their lives.

ATHANASIAN. My good friend, though you are very zealous in this important cauſe, yet your zeal is conducted by reaſon and knowledge. Party-zealots, in the midſt of their ſolicitous concern to

ſettle

le opinions and religious practices, are too apt to ɡet, or diſregard the chriſtian obligations to uni-ſal charity and holineſs of life. I am really con-ced, that what you have ſaid, highly deſerves the ous conſideration of all thoſe who profeſs them-es diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, and, in earneſt, be-e the divine authority of the holy ſcriptures. I ıe to make a proper uſe of this religious conference, l to act ſuch a part, in conſequence of it, as will accepted at that ſolemn time, when God ſhall ge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt.

UNITARIAN. I ſincerely rejoice, my dear chriſ-ı friend, that you are become a Berean, an in-ırer for yourſelf, and reſolved to ſearch the ſcripture th an unprejudiced mind; which excellent temper ll, I make no doubt, lead you to a rational ſatiſ-ɨtion upon this, and other religious ſubjects. And ıy the bleſſings of the one ſupreme God, and Father all, attend your ſincere diſquiſitions.

A SECOND

FRIENDLY DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

EUGENIUS AND THEOPHILUS.

EUGENIUS. It is now, my dear friend, ſome ew years ſince we held that conference which was ccaſioned by your diſreſpectful behaviour, as I then onceived of it, during ſome parts of the public ſervice f the eſtabliſhed church. The good temper which ve preſerved in that converſation, and the earneſt efire after truth, which equally prevailed in both of s, have been the occaſion, ſince that time, of many leaſing reflections. And as I ſhall, I truſt, never eaſe to intereſt myſelf in the happineſs of my fellow-reatures; I will never ceaſe to pray to almighty God, that the ſame love of truth, and the ſame andid and charitable temper, may univerſally prevail mong all the different denominations of chriſtians; eing fully perſuaded that until we can agree to ntertain different opinions upon religious ſubjects, ith perfect harmony and love, we ſhall never diſover the truth, or be capable of receiving it.

THEOPHILUS.

THEOPHILUS. Theſe ſentiments, with which our converſation is now renewed, and which have preſerved the recollection of our former conference with ſo much pleaſure in your memory, are no leſs the ſentiments of my heart, than they are of yours. My affection for you, as my friend, never ſuffered the leaſt diminution on account of the differences of opinion which, at any time ſubſiſted between us. The progreſs of our judgment is gradual; and the meaſure of our conviction cannot be foreknown by us. Serious inquiry into ſerious ſubjects, is our duty; but the reſult of ſuch inquiries is not within our command.

EUGENIUS. The controverſy in which we were before engaged, began in the different opinions we entertained of the perſon of Chriſt. The ſyſtem which I ſupported was very properly diſcriminated by the name of "athanaſian," by which appellation I was then diſtinguiſhed. Our debate, as you well know, concluded, on my part, with ſome very ample conceſſions reſpecting the obligation and neceſſity of religious inquiry, and with my hearty and voluntary promiſe to read, think, and determine for myſelf. Thus far, your arguments had all the effect you deſired; for till that time, from early prejudice, from a blind deference to the judgment of many good and learned men, from a falſe reverence for the doctrines eſtabliſhed by the laws of my country, and from an unmanly fear of exerciſing my

my reaſon in the ſcriptures of revelation, I had committed my religious faith, not only to the keeping, but to the diſpoſal of others; I was wont to reſolve every doubt by human authority, and was moſt reluctant to ſuffer either others or myſelf to traverſe thoſe regions of liberty, which are diſcovered in the goſpel, and preſented to our view and contemplation; wherein reaſon is the guide, and private judgment, uncontrouled, the ſole arbiter of opinion.

THEOPHILUS. Your ready conviction, and generous avowal of it, do equal honour to your head and heart; and beſpeak you to be all that I wiſh to ſee you. Names are indifferent, except for the purpoſe of diſtinguiſhing the parties to whom they are given. That of "unitarian," however, continues to belong to me with the ſame propriety as heretofore; but in accommodation to the preſent turn of our diſcourſe, in conſequence of the change in your mind, I have aſſumed the name of Theophilus, wiſhing to be approved no leſs the friend of God, than a believer in his unity, and a worſhipper of him, in ſpirit and in truth.

Believe me, my friend, I am moſt ſolicitous that mankind ſhould inquire into the ſcriptures, and judge for themſelves; for in the maintenance and exerciſe of this liberty alone will they ever be able to arrive at the truth. Particular doctrines are of inferior conſequence; but theſe will come nearer the truth, in proportion as men inquire and judge

for

THEOPHILUS. The change of our ſentiments upon particular points, naturally leads us to the extenſion of our charity; for when we find that the revolutions in our own minds require indulgence and forbearance, we are more readily diſpoſed to allow to others that liberty which we find ſo eſſential to our own happineſs. In the progreſſion from error to truth, there are many gradations; and the advancement being infinite, who ſhall ſay to the other, "thus far ſhalt thou proceed, and no farther."

EUGENIUS. I apprehend that you are now diſpoſed to conſider my confeſſion, as evidence of a greater progreſs than I have really made. Excuſe me; the very phraſe, "confeſſion," is objectionable, and offenſive; and has no buſineſs in the church of Chriſt,—except in the qualified ſenſe, you will here underſtand me to uſe it, in this our friendly converſation.

THEOPHILUS. You have, it ſeems, made ſuch proficiency in the ſpirit of proteſtantiſm, as to find out that words, innocent in themſelves, have been made the engines of much miſchief in the chriſtian world. But, all pleaſantry apart, I may, I think, now inquire whether you have not been ſeriouſly offended, in the courſe of the free exerciſe of your own judgment in the ſtudy of the ſcriptures, at the dogmatical air with which moſt chriſtian churches have decided upon matters of faith and doctrine; and

and whether, among theſe, it has never occurred to you that the church of England has partaken much of the ſame ſpirit, and ſhared largely in the ſame practice; and thereby contributed, notwithſtanding her proteſtant profeſſions, to ſcandalize the purity of the goſpel.

EUGENIUS. The conduct of the church of England, I do conceive to be reprehenſible in ſeveral reſpects. Some of the doctrines ſhe maintains, I conſider as unſcriptural; and the impoſition of them upon the conſciences of her miniſters, I think inconſiſtent with the principles of the proteſtant reformation. But ſhe is countenanced, in both theſe reſpects, by the conduct of all the other reformed churches. Her doctrines were the doctrines of the reformers, in whom we make much boaſt; and as to the impoſition of certain articles of faith, they are chiefly confined to miniſters, and graduates of the two univerſities, and affect not the people at large. And in the expunging of particular doctrines out of her formulas, there might be ſo little agreement among thoſe who are diſſatisfied with them, that I feel ſome reluctance to hazard the experiment of another reformation.

THEOPHILUS. There is much candour and ingenuouſneſs in your obſervations; and your own natural forbearing temper correſponds with them. Without intending any depreciation of theſe excellent qualities, I cannot but think that they may

be carried into a criminal lethargy or timidity. They are qualities, which, if indulged with eaſe and ſupineneſs, may become hurtful; but, if brought forward into action, will greatly contribute to the happineſs of mankind, and will appear particularly amiable, and eminently uſeful in theological controverſy.

You will, therefore, excuſe me, if, with the ſame temper of mind, I ſhould vindicate the demands which truth makes upon every inquiſitive mind; and inſiſt that there lies an obligation upon every man to take her by the hand, and to accompany her whereſoever ſhe ſhall lead him. In this ſentiment, I apprehend that the preſent peace of mind and future happineſs of my fellow chriſtians are moſt eſſentially ſerved; and that without a cool and diſpaſſionate, but inflexible, adherence to truth and integrity in all the public (religious, civil, and ſocial) intercourſes of human life, men become highly blameable before God, and fail to ſerve their generation, and that of their children after them, in their beſt and moſt valuable intereſts.

EUGENIUS. My affection for truth would, I truſt, ſupport me under any perſecution in her ſervice. But, as we may diſagree in the eſtimate we may form, and the neceſſity we may ſee of purſuing her, in certain caſes; let us proceed to diſcuſs a queſtion which cannot but be intereſting, and may be uſeful to us both.

THEOPHILUS.

THEOPHILUS. I will moſt readily accept your challenge; and examine the obligation of truth, as it affects religious opinions and the public profeſſion of them, which is the ſubject more particularly before us, and which will immediately apply to the ſituation in which we both ſtand.

You have acknowledged that "the church of England maintains ſome doctrines which you conſider as unſcriptural." It muſt, therefore, follow, that in your opinion ſhe ought to reform herſelf in theſe reſpects. The governors of the church ought moſt certainly to enter on this good work, from time to time, as occaſion is found to require. But it has been the practice not only of the Engliſh church, but of all eſtabliſhed churches, to protract the work of reformation. Whether from an unwillingneſs to confeſs themſelves in an error, or from any fear of the loſs of the lucrative endowments which are appendant to eſtabliſhed opinions, I cannot ſay, but it is a fact, that they have been ſo invariably averſe to reformation, that they have ever moſt tenaciouſly retained their reſpective ſyſtems, as long as they could; and indeed have ſeldom, if ever, been driven out of them, but by civil commotions, or by ſome cauſe originally foreign, and ſeemingly inadequate to ſuch an effect.

But further; the very claim of a right to eſtabliſh human formularies of religious faith and doctrine, is ſo directly contrary to the deſign and ſpirit of the

goſpel, that it is aſtoniſhing that men could ever dare thus to arrogate to themſelves that power, to which they had no right; and it is ſtill more aſtoniſhing that mankind have permitted ſuch a groſs uſurpation of their deareſt and moſt valuable privilege. But what intolerant men have impoſed, indolent and wordly-minded men have ſubmitted to.

It is even yet more wonderful, that when the papal authority was expelled from theſe kingdoms, and ſeveral of the doctrines of the church of Rome were diſowned and rejected, as burdens too grievous to be borne, the reformers only tranſplanted that authority from papal into regal hands; and all thoſe doctrines which were admitted by the principal actors in that ſcene (themſelves involved in the darkneſs and ſuperſtition of their age) were retained in our reformed church. While nothing ſeems more plain to the humbleſt capacity, than that the ſame arguments which applied to the power of the church of Rome, would apply to the ſame power in the church of England, or in any other church. It is equally obvious, that if there remained any right in the proteſtant community to impoſe one opinion, there exiſted the ſame right to impoſe fifty, or five hundred.

EUGENIUS. You do not, ſurely, mean to inſinuate that the ſpirit of the church of England is as intolerant as that of the church of Rome; or

that

that the groſs doctrines of the latter are not infinitely more objectionable than thoſe of the former.

THEOPHILUS. I not only mean to inſinuate, but to inſiſt and prove, that the character of intolerance (which is the marked character of Antichriſt) is not confined to papal Rome, but tranſferred into every church, which lords it over God's heritage, and teaches for doctrines the commandments of men. I decline the uſe of all hard names: but while the argument applies with equal force againſt the claims and practice of all churches, I do not think it conſiſtent with juſtice, to appropriate it to one church, only becauſe I ſhall be joined in ſuch appropriation by another: it ought to be applied to all churches alike, which ſhall alike remain ſo far unreformed as to fall within its reach.

EUGENIUS. This muſt be granted to be fair reaſoning; and, as we are told that "many antichriſts ſhall ariſe," it will deſerve the moſt ſerious attention of every ſociety of chriſtians, by whatever name they may be pleaſed to diſtinguiſh themſelves, to take eſpecial care that they come not under that deſcription, or ſuffer wreck upon that rock which has been ſo fatal to their brethren. As proteſtants pretend not only to have diſcovered, but to be directed by, the light and liberty of the goſpel, which lay hid and concealed under the corruptions of popery, through a long night of darkneſs and ignorance; and, in conſequence of that diſcovery, to have publicly proteſted

againſt the abominations and the intolerance of the church of Rome, it is certainly more blameable in them, and directly ſubverſive of the foundation principles of their own cauſe, to aſſume to themſelves that authority which they do not allow to others.

THEOPHILUS. It was this inconſiſtent behaviour of the proteſtants which gave occaſion, very ſoon after their ſeparation from the church of Rome, to the reproachful obſervation of their adverſaries, which was couched in the queſtion, "Where was your religion before the time of Luther?"

The proper anſwer to the reflection intended by this inquiry, is, that it might be found in the bible, where it ſtill remains: for "the bible, and the bible only, is the religion of proteſtants." The queſtion has a popular caſt with it; and the charge conveyed in it, can only be wiped away by an improved and more conſiſtent conduct in proteſtants themſelves: for while ſo many of the ſame features are diſcernible in both communions, they conſpire to form that reſemblance which we generally denominate "a family likeneſs."

EUGENIUS. Theſe obſervations tend to prove, what I before virtually admitted, that a further reformation of the doctrines and pretenſions of the eſtabliſhed church is much wanted. But of the expedience of ſuch a meaſure, I am not ſo fully ſatisfied. The ſpiritual governors of the church, and the civil governors of the ſtate, are ſo cloſely leagued together,

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in oppoſing every attempt towards a review and reform of the eccleſiaſtical ſyſtem, that any further reformation is, to ſay the leaſt, an hopeleſs proſpect, and very unlikely to happen in any time, ſhort of the revolution of a century. Precipitation, therefore, would only protract any favorable iſſue to the reaſonable expectation of liberal men, and expoſe thoſe who were well diſpoſed to the cauſe of reformation, to the indignant reſentment of their ſuperiors, without forwarding the end for which they laboured.

THEOPHILUS. The unpleaſant appearances which are diſtinguiſhable in the eccleſiaſtical hemiſphere, ſeem to determine you to a patience acquieſcence under the impoſitions of power; nor does your deſpondency find any relief, but in the very diſtant hope of further reformation, when you are gone to reſt. But a conviction of the great importance and of the righteouſneſs of ſuch a cauſe, ſhould not be cramped by conſiderations of merely imaginary expediency, conceived only through deſpair, and calculated to cloud the dawning of that future day, when the goſpel of Chriſt ſhall be offered to the world, pure, and without human mixture or alloy. We are, indeed, neceſſarily affected by the wretched policy of the powers which bear rule in this world, but we ſhould not be acceſſary to their delinquency, or partners in their guilt, by ſilently ſuffering the multiplied grievances under which the church of

Chriſt

Chriſt is made to groan, to ſubſiſt and remain without complaint. So far as we apprehend the oracles of God to be corrupted and perverted, and the rights of chriſtians to be deſpoiled; it is ſurely a part of our duty to God, and the beſt proof of our brotherly love and affection for our fellow chriſtians, to call their ſober and diſpaſſionate attention to their own conduct, and to lay before them the ſad depredations they have made upon, and the impediments they have laid in the way of, the ſucceſs of the goſpel. For theſe things we ſhall be anſwerable before the judge of all the world, if we acquit not ourſelves like men, and ſtand not faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, according as we ſhall have attained the knowledge of it, and had ability and opportunity of doing good. It is our duty to follow the light and conviction we have obtained, and to hold them forth to others, that they alſo may be benefitted thereby, if ſo it ſhall ſeem good to the wiſe diſpoſer of all things.

There are in the higheſt orders of the church, many very good and excellent men, but their very ſituation is unfavourable to the reſtoration of the knowledge of the goſpel, or the admiſſion of the rights of chriſtians to their due extent. Thoſe who may be well-diſpoſed to reformation, may be afraid to meet the obloquy which would be thrown upon them for their endeavours in ſuch a cauſe; like father Paul, they may not have the ſpirit of Luther. But I mean neither to

apologize,

apologize, nor to account for the reluctance of others to complete a meaſure, which appears to me to deſerve and demand their utmoſt vigilance, aſſiduity, and perſeverance.

This being the true ſtate of the caſe with regard to the great and powerful; it becomes the more neceſſary for thoſe, whoſe lot may be caſt in inferior ſtations, but who ſenſibly ſee and feel the injuries done to the chriſtian cauſe, to labour with increaſed ardour in the good work, according as their talents and reſpective vocations ſhall admit.

It has been the opinion of ſome very good and very eminent men, that "no effort is loſt." Hiſtory will convince us that a little ſpark has often kindled a great flame, in a good as well as in an evil work: The great revolutions of the world have, not ſeldom, had little beginnings. But, the moſt ſubſtantial encouragement of all, is one that is unconcerned in ſpeculation, and remains, independent either of ſucceſs or defeat: and that is, that every man is perſonally anſwerable for his own conduct, and whichever way the world may beſtow its favors, it is the wiſe man's aim to ſeek the approbation of his God.

But, even according to human eſtimation of things, the minds of men ſhould be prepared by the previous exhibition of the weight and juſtice of the cauſe of reformation, although time alone can complete it. In the courſe of the preſent century, the controverſies of Clarke, Whiſton and Hoadly, have greatly enlightened

lightened all orders of men: in our own time, the Confeſſional has collected the rays of proteſtant light into a focus, which nothing can reſiſt, but the ſullenneſs of an impenetrable mind: the clerical petition called the attention of liberal laymen to the queſtion of church authority, and reduced it to the loweſt credit in the eſtimation of an enlightened people: the application alſo to parliament for a repeal of the teſt law, though it did not remove it from the ſtatute book, convinced every ingenuous mind in the kingdom, that the requiring every perſon to receive the lord's ſupper, according to the rites of a particular church, previous to his acceptance of a place of civil truſt, was entirely foreign to the deſign of the inſtitutor, a groſs proſtitution of the chriſtian ordinance, and a very inſufficient ſecurity to the ſtate.

EUGENIUS. Your argument, and the recital of theſe recent circumſtances in the hiſtory of this country, are really almoſt ſufficient to excite a reaſonable zeal, and to encourage perſeverance in the hope of a favourable iſſue; which the tenacious adherence to to ſyſtem, and the ſilent oppoſition of great churchmen, ſo much diſcountenance.

THEOPHILUS. I have yet another important fact in modern hiſtory, in reſerve. It is not fifteen years ago, ſince we could not have found a place of public worſhip, openly conducted upon unitarian principles in our iſland. But now theſe exiſt in our capital,

and

and in ſeveral parts of this kingdom, and of Scotland.

EUGENIUS. This is certainly more than a preſumption that a better ſpirit prevails abroad in theſe our times, than in the days of our forefathers. The opening ſuch places of public worſhip, and the public avowal of the ſame ſentiments in places which had been before appropriated to the ſame purpoſe, reflect much honour on our nation, and alſo on the miniſters and congregations concerned in them; for it ſhews not only that a tolerant ſpirit prevails in our land, but affords an example that there are men, who, being perſuaded of the proper and abſolute unity of the object of divine worſhip, will offer up their prayers to God alone, in ſincerity and truth, according to their own apprehenſion.

THEOPHILUS. A little time ago, you told me that you thought that the evil of impoſing articles of faith was greatly diminiſhed by being reſtrained to miniſters, and graduates of the two engliſh univerſities. This apparent limitation does in no wiſe reconcile me to the impoſition, nor does it, as I think, much leſſen the ill conſequences of that unholy practice. For, if you will allow yourſelf to reflect a moment on the intimate connection which ſubſiſts between the people and their miniſter, and that what the one aſſents to, as the engagement of his faith, and is bound to teach, the other will be obliged to hear; you will think both parties greatly affected by them.

them. Beſides, the miniſter's engagement muſt either oblige him to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, the devices of dark and ignorant ages, or to practiſe all the arts of equivocation and hypocriſy, in diſpenſing the goſpel of truth; the ſame engagement will alſo oblige the honeſt layman, (whom you think little concerned in this impoſition,) to reject with diſdain that proviſion of doctrine which the ſtate hath directed, or to receive thoſe inventions as wholeſome food, which may prove deadly poiſon. In either caſe, he meets with a poor compenſation for the tithe of all that he poſſeſſes.

EUGENIUS. I have always conſidered the laity, as equally intereſted with the clergy, in the right knowledge and honour of the chriſtian faith; and for the ſake of their common advantage and improvement, have ſometimes wiſhed that the ſhepherd might not only look well after the ſheep, but that the ſheep would, in their turn, direct the ſame attention to their ſhepherd. But I muſt own, that I was not aware that the laity were ſo deeply intereſted in the ſubſcription of the clergy, as they now appear to be. I had omitted to recollect, that to poiſon the ſpring was to poiſon the ſtream; and that the living waters of the goſpel, were, in all public and authoriſed adminiſtrations of them, to be drank through the unpleaſant medium of human compoſitions. However, by that kind of fatality which oftentimes diſappoints exorbitant demands, the ſubſcriptions of the clergy have

have not this univerſal effect; the ſignature of their names is made with ſome mental reſervations, or with a latitude of conſtruction, that leaves them, in a great degree, at liberty; and their ſermons are, pretty generally, compoſed on this broad foundation.

THEOPHILUS. You ſeem not to be apprized of the great and additional grievances that follow the exerciſe of this unhallowed latitude of conſtruction, which the preſſing occaſion of the ſubſcribing party has called into exiſtence. A ſuſpicion of notorious inſincerity and prevarication is entertained of ſuch of the clergy, as aſſume this latitude; a latitude, diſallowed by the authority that impoſes the ſubſcription, which was, in very truth, deſigned, however ill it has ſucceeded, to "prevent diverſities of opinion."

Nor do the evil conſequences of clerical inſincerity end here; the miniſters of Chriſt are further ſuſpected of diſbelieving chriſtianity itſelf; and betwen thoſe who impoſe the ſubſcription, and thoſe who diſingenuouſly comply with it, is divided the miſerable honour of ſowing, far and wide, the ſeeds of ſcepticiſm and unbelief, and producing that plentiful harveſt of infidelity, which is the modern growth of other climes beſide our own.

But now, my friend, after deſiring your attention to the diſtreſſing ſituation of the eſtabliſhed clergy, who have entered into ſtipulations and engagements, which they find inconſiſtent with the honeſt and con-

ſcientious diſcharge of their duty; engagements, which draw into their vortex the ſad alternative—continue in your miniſtry ſelf-reproached, or expoſe yourſelf to poverty and ſcorn; ſuffer me to feel and mourn for all thoſe who are in this unhappy ſituation; for, as I earneſtly pray for their deliverance from this more than Egyptian bondage, ſo I ſhould think nothing too much to do, or to ſuffer, to render them ſubſtantial relief.

You will forgive me this effuſion; and now permit me to turn your attention from the caſe of the clergy to my objections to ſuch laymen's conformity to the public ſervice of the church, whoſe private ſentiments and opinions are in no ſort of agreement with the doctrines of her liturgy. In purſuing this converſation, I muſt deſire, and am perſuaded, you will not refuſe to deliver to me your own honeſt and competent judgment upon this ſubject.

In this queſtion, I think you are perſonally much intereſted; for, if I miſtake not, I underſtand that you are become an unitarian; that is, you are now fully perſuaded that religious worſhip is due to the one only living and true God, and to none other.

EUGENIUS. You do no more than juſtice to my preſent opinion, to aſcribe to me the belief in one God, and that he only is to be worſhipped. My converſion to this ſentiment has been the deliberate conſequence of our former free and friendly intercourſe, and of the attention I was thereby excited to,

and

and have ſince paid to this important ſubject. I believe, that the one almighty God created the world by his power, that he governs it by his providence, and will finally judge all mankind, and apportion happineſs or miſery, according as they ſhall have done good or evil. I believe, that he alone is the object of religious worſhip, and alone capable of hearing our prayers.

THEOPHILUS. Your firm belief of the divine unity, being the reſult of your own inquiry, I truſt, you will more clearly ſee the rectitude of that conduct, with which, (as it appears to me,) ſuch a perſuaſion ought to be attended, by one who lives under an athanaſian eſtabliſhment of religion. The backwardneſs of great churchmen, in the work of reformation, has been already obſerved upon: and the conformity of certain of the clergy with the eſtabliſhed forms, which they cannot entirely approve, has been the ſubject of our joint concern.

In this ſtate, therefore, of our conference, it becomes expedient to enquire, how, and by what arguments, you, who are a layman, unſhackled by ſubſcription, and beſet, on neither ſide, by the clergyman's unhappy alternative,—how you, I ſay, juſtify your continued conformity to an athanaſian form of public worſhip, which you cannot approve. Surely your integrity and practical love of truth are as much impeached by your voluntary compliance, as the character of any like-minded eccleſiaſtic: your having

made no ſtipulation for your liberty, nor deriving any honour or emolument from the church, leaves you, the more eaſily, and at much leſs coſt, to follow the dictates of your own mind.

EUGENIUS. If I cannot wholly juſtify, I think I can excuſe my conformity; at leaſt, I am very willing to give you my reaſons. I ſolicit your impartial judgment alſo in return, and will honeſtly uſe every faculty I have, in forming my own.

You will, in the firſt place, be pleaſed to remember, that I am only an hearer of the public ſervice of the church, and can, therefore, aſſent to ſo much, and ſuch parts of the prayers, as I approve; and reject ſuch as I may judge to be contrary to the truth: this I can do, juſt in the ſame manner as I may approve part of a ſermon, and reject the remainder.

THEOPHILUS. By this plauſible ſophiſtry, which you practiſe upon yourſelf, I conceive that you greatly defeat the good effects which ſhould follow your attendance upon public worſhip. It is generally true of moſt men, (and as much ſo of the beſt of men, as of others,) that to keep the mind ſeriouſly and devoutly occupied, while offering up their hearts to God in ſuch ſervice, it is neceſſary to avoid every diſtraction which may draw off, or divide the attention. Now the athanaſian doctrine of a trinity, occurs ſo very frequently in the liturgy, and is alſo in many places ſo groſsly expreſſed, that all ſuch paſſages

muſt

muſt not only divert the mind by employing it in transferring the aſcriptions of praiſe, thankſgiving, and adoration from a plurality of Gods, to the one ſupreme Being; but the ſpirit of devotion muſt be diſturbed and diſperſed in the very adjuſtment of the language; and, added to this, the very expreſſions themſelves muſt be very ſhocking and offenſive to the ear of one, who looks up to God alone, as the object of adoration, without peer or partner.

The caſe of prayer, which is a ſocial act, and addreſſed to God, will not admit of illuſtration from the liberty which we very commendably exerciſe in hearing ſermons, when the auditors may receive or reject what they hear, according as they ſhall be determined by the evidence and arguments produced. The caſes are no way ſimilar. The preacher delivers his illuſtration of a portion of the ſcripture, ſupports it by argument, draws and applies his inferences according to the beſt of his ability; but theſe are no further concluſive upon his hearers than as they meet their judgment and conſent. But, in the buſineſs of prayer, the caſe is far different. The mind being previouſly acquainted with the form of addreſs to the throne of grace, the worſhippers of God ſhould be intirely conſenting, and fully and ſingly employed in the prayers, and praiſes, and thankſgivings there expreſſed, in the contemplation of that Being to whom they are made, and in thoſe aſpirations which naturally accompany every act of rational and elevated devotion.

That eaſy compliance to which you are diſpoſed, in this caſe, is, with many people, the reſult of indifference. It would equally excuſe your going to maſs in the romiſh communion, as to the ſervice of the church of England; for the ſame reſervations which you think keep you clear, in the one, from any implied conſent to the doctrine of the trinity, would, in the other, acquit you of believing the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation. Upon the principles of your argument, all integrity of heart and mind may be diſpenſed with, in thoſe very ſervices, where, of all others, they are moſt becoming, and in which there can be no temptation, which does not ariſe from indifference, or the moſt contemptible and ineffectual hypocriſy.

Neither is this all. Your example may be, and, probably, will be contagious; it may prove the means of continuing, and even of ſpreading the ſame diſingenuous practice among others; a practice, which allows and familiariſes the profeſſion of the groſſeſt corruptions of chriſtian worſhip, and repreſents them as being perfectly compatible with the pureſt faith.

EUGENIUS. In the earneſtneſs of your argument, your have forgotten to make any allowance for a certain unwillingneſs to appear particularly ſcrupulous, in a matter, which, though important in itſelf, the world is not diſpoſed to think ſo highly of, as to excuſe ſuch ſingularity of conduct.

THEOPHILUS.

THEOPHILUS. The proper anſwer to this feeble apology, ſhall come from yourſelf, aſk then your own heart, whether you ought to place the indulgence of any native bafhfulneſs, or any deſire to avoid that ſingularity, which you affect to think ſo formidable, in competition with the great duty of worſhipping the one God and Father of all, in ſincerity and truth; and of confeſſing before men, the doctrines of the great meſſenger of glad tidings. You well know on what authority we are told, that *whoſoever ſhall confeſs Chriſt before men, him will he confeſs alſo before his Father, who is in heaven: but whoſoever ſhall deny him, before men, him will he alſo deny before his Father, who is in heaven.* (Matt. x. 32, and 33)

The prayers in which you join, in the public ſervice of the church, are not ſuch as you either do, or would adopt in your cloſet, or in your family. And the reaſon why you reject the uſe of them in private, is becauſe you think them ſinful, inaſmuch as they are directed to three diſtinct beings or perſons, inſtead of God alone. How then can the ſame conduct be innocent, when acted before the world, which is ſinful in the privacy of your own houſe? or, as the queſtion may be more forcibly ſtated, how much more reprehenſible is ſuch evil conduct before the world, where it may ſeduce and corrupt the integrity of others, than when confined to a more private ſcene?

Apply the ſpirit of this queſtion to any of the common

common tranſactions in life, and you will acknowledge not only the wiſdom, but even the expediency of exhibiting that rectitude of principle and behaviour in our own characters, which we look for in others. Without this endeavour on our parts, we really countenance that very duplicity, which we diſapprove and condemn. And, in our chriſtian calling, we ſhould be very careful not to give the moſt diſtant occaſion of ſcandal to our profeſſion; but to draw forward and to excite by our mutual example, that inflexible and intrepid integrity which adds grace to the chriſtian character, and inſpires a fortitude which looks down with indifference upon nothing, but what is not deſerving of a wiſe man's choice or attention.

EUGENIUS. I moſt readily concede to you, that that ſervice of prayer which does not honeſtly expreſs the mind of the worſhipper, and is therefore ſinful, muſt be equally ſo whether offered in private, or in ſocial worſhip. This obſervation had occurred to me before, and therefore I qualified my attendance by with-holding my aſſent to ſuch parts of the church liturgy as I did not approve. But this expedient having involved much diſtraction of mind, and leaving me in a ſituation which held me forth as an example of countenancing, by my preſence, what I did not approve in my heart; I have been occaſionally diſpoſed to forego and abſent myſelf from all public worſhip, becauſe of the irreconcilable diſagreement

greement between the tritheiſm of the eſtabliſhed liturgy, which I now conſider as idolatry, and the addreſſing all prayer to God alone, which I apprehend to be the religion of nature, and of revelation. I have, therefore, had it in contemplation to confine myſelf to the duty and exerciſe of private prayer.

THEOPHILUS. If you ſhould perſiſt in adopting this idea of a ſilent retreat from a worſhip, which you ſo greatly diſapprove, by withdrawing from all ſocial devotion, I cannot but think that you abuſe the talents and opportunities afforded you, and deſert the ſtandard of the chriſtian faith; I alſo think that you will again place the influence of your example in a ſituation, where it may do much harm.

Social worſhip is a very great means of edification, in a variety of ways: it calls men forth to the public avowal of their principles in the face of open day; it advances brotherly love in an inter-communion in the offices of religion; it concentrates the example of good men, and animates devotion in their neighbours; it keeps alive the principles of religion and piety, and prepares men to act a virtuous part in the ſcenes of active life.

Now as, upon your own plan of privacy, the reaſon of your receſſion would not be rightly, or generally known, your abſence from all public worſhip (becauſe one form of it was exceptionable and offenſive) would encourage the ſame open behaviour

viour in other men, though actuated by very different motives.

If you cannot enjoy the benefit of ſocial worſhip in the eſtabliſhed church of your country, by rendering your praiſes and thankſgivings, and offering your ſupplications to the one infinite, eternal, and only God; there may be other places where this acceptable and grateful ſervice may be conducted after a form which may intirely harmonize with the ingenuous convictions of your own mind. The apoſtle Paul hath not qualified, with any reſtriction, his exhortation, to *flee from idolatry* (1 Cor. x. 14.); and if words are capable of a determinate meaning, the nature of the offence, and our duty to avoid it, are equally clear.

If no other public place ſhall offer, and no means ſhould preſent themſelves of opening one of greater extent, you may convert a room in your own houſe to an houſe of prayer. There may be other perſons in your neighbourhood, who may, from principle and ſimilar ſentiments, be glad to join you in ſo good a work; and even this little church may, in the courſe of a few years, be the occaſion of planting a much larger one. Nor are you, or any man, unprovided with very good ſervices for ſuch religious ſocieties.*

EUGENIUS. I am not inſenſible of the rectitude of the line of conduct which you have pointed out, or

* See p. 39. note.

r of the advantage which the purſuing of it might roduce to the true intereſts of religion and virtue; ut it would expoſe me to ſo much obſervation and eproach, as may bear down my ſpirit, and defeat the ery end deſigned; I may not be able to meet the ate of a reformer.

THEOPHILUS. This is to relinquiſh the poſt of luty, upon a plea every way inadequate and inadmiſible, and very unworthy of a faithful ſervant and oldier of Jeſus Chriſt. Perſonal privacy and eaſe are he leaſt we can ſacrifice in ſo good a cauſe as the dvancement of the worſhip of the one God, and Father of all. Singular inſtances of integrity, in any of the ordinary concerns of life, do not indeed often eſcape ſarcaſtic obſervations, and ſometimes temporary ſcandal; but they are, nevertheleſs approved by the virtuous and the good; and bring, with every act in which they are connected, that peace and ſatisfaction which the unprincipled and rofligate can neither take away, nor enjoy.*

As for your fearing that you ſhould not be able to meet the fate of a reformer, I truſt, for the honour of chriſtendom, that all apprehenſion of being called to any very extraordinary ſufferings for publicly maintaining the worſhip of one God, is entirely groundleſs.

* "Certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, reſt in providence, and turn on the poles of truth."—Lord BACON.

groundleſs. Poſitive perſecution is diſowned on all hands: honour and diſhonour, good report and evil report, may indeed await you; but ſurely your chriſtian faith will ſupport you under theſe fluctuations in your pilgrimage, and carry your mind into the contemplation of a crown of glory, and a future bliſs that will never end.

EUGENIUS. The pointed force with which you direct your argument will carry conviction to any reaſonable and ingenuous mind. The greateſt danger is, halting between two opinions, between duty and inclination; and the true ſtate of the queſtion, as it now lies before me for deciſion, is, ſhall I obey God or man? Notwithſtanding, however, this confeſſion of my view of our ſubject, accompanied with a ſerious deſire to acquit myſelf in a manner becoming my chriſtian profeſſion, I find myſelf, from a variety of motives (neither excuſable, nor yet, I think, abſolutely criminal), ſtrongly reluctant to avow my ſentiments explicitly before the world, and to ſecond them by that conduct which they ſhould ſeem to demand.

THEOPHILUS. The preſent ſtate of your mind, my dear friend, leaves your conformity to the worſhip of the eſtabliſhed church, or a ſilent, unobſerved, clandeſtine retreat from it, equally inexcuſable. Your laſt declaration amounts to a formal ſurrender of the queſtion; therefore, it now becomes more proper for me to leave you to your own reflections,

which

which cannot fail to determine you to adopt that open and upright conduct which will beſt advance the glory of God, and can alone meet with his approbation. Every day's continuance in your preſent indeciſion, adds danger and criminality to your ſituation. You will recollect the exhortation in the book of revelation, to quit Babylon, and I know that you allow the application: *come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that you receive not of her plagues.*

A mind like yours, informed by voluntary and patient inquiry (in the midſt of your prudent attention to your great ſecular concerns), will not long remain in your preſent reluctant and diſtreſſing inactivity. Where duty calls, I know your heart diſpoſes you to obey. And the ſame courſe of ſtudy which has diſcovered to you the truth, will have ſufficiently impreſſed you with its importance before all other conſiderations.

That knowledge which you have acquired, and which has le i you out of intellectual darkneſs, will naturally point out that line of conduct inſiſted upon in the goſpel, and which is made the condition of its promiſes. Having firſt convinced your underſtanding, it will animate your reſolution to walk in that plain direct road, which turns neither to the right hand, nor to the left. Nor will your high ſenſe of duty, or the goodneſs of your own heart, ſuffer you to reſt, until you have made the laſt advance in this

journey of religious and moral integrity, by ſhaking off every remaining ſhackle of religious bondage which any prejudice, timidity, or deference to others, may have faſtened around you. In the perfect love and fear of God, in ſtrict integrity and principle towards him, and in love and brotherly affection for all mankind, ſhall we alone find that peace of mind in this world, which is only to be exceeded by the happineſs of another.

EUGENIUS. Our friendly and improving converſation upon the important ſubject which has engaged our attention, and really intereſted our affection for each other, may now be cloſed, ſince we are both become of one mind. Mutual acknowledgments of kindneſs have been received, and returned, between us. And the reſult of your victory, is liberty to the vanquiſhed.

There requires ſo very little time to form a right deciſion of conduct, where the judgment is already convinced, and the mind is awakened to receive the force and impreſſion of truth, that I do not heſitate a moment to acknowledge my entire ſatisfaction in your arguments; and to aſſure you that I will, from this hour, withdraw myſelf from a church, whoſe foundation is laid in exacting impoſitions upon the conſciences of men, and whoſe conſtituent doctrine is idolatry.

There are, indeed, certain appendant circumſtances in every man's ſituation, with reſpect to his prejudices,

prejudices, habits, conſtitution, and connections, which cauſe him involuntarily to demur, where he ought inſtantly to decide. Theſe, however, are under command; and ſhall henceforth vaniſh and give way to ſuperior conviction and the obligations of truth.

Let theſe conſiderations excuſe the trouble I have given you, while your candid forbearance with them have greatly enhanced to me the value of your friendſhip, which, I truſt, will be uninterrupted to the end of our lives.

REASONS

FOR RESIGNING THE

RECTORY OF PANTON

AND

VICARAGE OF SWINDERBY,

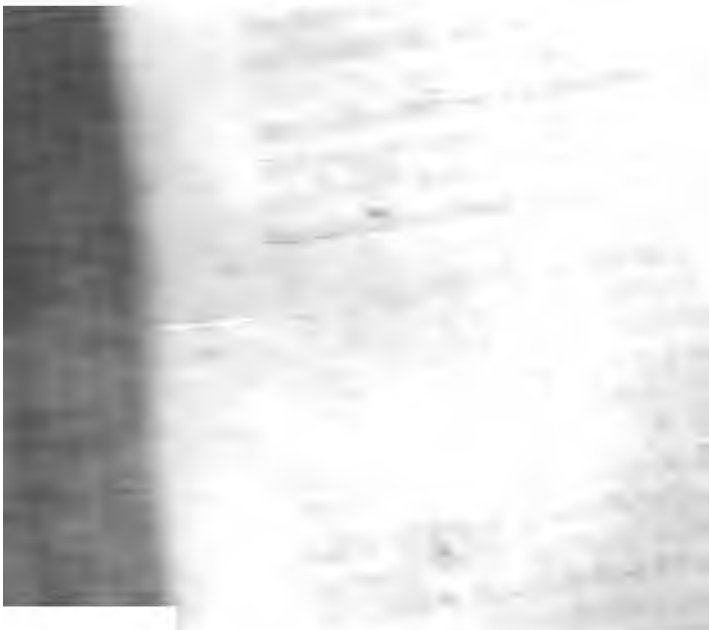
IN

LINCOLNSHIRE;

AND QUITTING THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY JOHN DISNEY, D.D. F.S.A.



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[Re-printed from the ſecond edition, 1783.]

REASONS

FOR QUITTING THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

A PUBLIC departure from my miniſtry in the eſtabliſhed church, and withdrawing myſelf from all attendance on its worſhip, ſhould ſeem not only to excuſe, but to demand, a declaration of the reaſons which have induced me to it, and made ſuch a conduct neceſſary.

Several years have paſſed ſince a petition was offered to the conſideration of parliament, praying for relief in the matter of ſubſcription to articles of religious faith and doctrine. That petition had my entire concurrence. It maintained the only principle upon which any proteſtant church, or ſociety of chriſtians, can defend itſelf againſt the arguments urged in behalf of popery; and pleaded ſtrongly, in my opinion, for the removal of all thoſe human inventions and additions to the goſpel of Jeſus, which create the too general diſbelief and rejection of it. The prayer of the petition, however, did not neceſſarily involve in it the truth or falſehood of any particular doctrines; neither did it aſk the ſubſtitution of others, either in whole or in part, in the

place of the preſent ſyſtem. Nevertheleſs, I preſume, there were very few, if any, in the number of the petitioners, who did not look forward to a review and amendment of the eſtabliſhed forms of public worſhip.

The ground which the petitioners had choſen was that impregnable rock, the ſufficiency of the ſcriptures, to the purpoſes of edification and ſalvation, for all chriſtian miniſters, as well as others; and thence they grounded their plea, that no church, or ſociety of chriſtians, had a right to require aſſent to human formularies of religious faith and doctrine, as the terms of communion, or admiſſion to the miniſtry, or otherwiſe.

The examination into the right of proteſtant churches, in thus arrogating and exerciſing the claim of impoſing explanatory articles of religious faith, in addition to the ſcriptures, neceſſarily brought on a more ſtrict enquiry into the agreement, or non-agreement, of the particular doctrines contained in the formularies of the church of England, with the word of God. The conſequence of this further examination was productive of the cleareſt demonſtration to many ſerious and liberal perſons, that not a few of the doctrines of the eſtabliſhed church were in no ſort of agreement with the chriſtian ſcriptures, whence they are preſumed to be derived.

As far as this inquiry went to ſatisfy my underſtanding concerning theſe queſtions, I am free to

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own, that I was convinced that many doctrines received as true by the church of England, in her articles and liturgy, were not only in no agreement, but in direct contradiction to what appeared to me to be the word of God.

In this ſituation, I did not heſitate to determine never to accept any further preferment in the eſtabliſhed church; becauſe I could not conſcientiouſly, and without equivocation, declare my aſſent and conſent to the thirty-nine articles and liturgy, as by law is required. And this determination I have ſteadily adhered to more than once, when offers were made me of preferments, in all other reſpects deſirable and advantageous to my ſecular intereſts. For ſome years I did not apprehend that my convictions would carry me any further. In this ſuppoſition, however, I have been miſtaken. And the ſame principle and reaſons which have heretofore made me decline to repeat my ſubſcription, have forced me to make a reſignation of my benefices, and of all the advantages I had acquired upon ſuch terms.

The public ſervice of the liturgy, or book of Common-Prayer, holds out for its objects of religious worſhip three diſtinct Beings, there ſtyled, *God the father, God the ſon, God the holy ghoſt*:* *one God in trinity, and trinity in unity*:† *not one only perſon, but three perſons.*‡

 Theſe,

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groundleſs. Poſitive perſecution is diſowned on all hands: honour and diſhonour, good report and evil report, may indeed await you; but ſurely your chriſtian faith will ſupport you under theſe fluctuations in your pilgrimage, and carry your mind into the contemplation of a crown of glory, and a future bliſs that will never end.

EUGENIUS. The pointed force with which you direct your argument will carry conviction to any reaſonable and ingenuous mind. The greateſt danger is, halting between two opinions, between duty and inclination; and the true ſtate of the queſtion, as it now lies before me for deciſion, is, ſhall I obey God or man? Notwithſtanding, however, this confeſſion of my view of our ſubject, accompanied with a ſerious deſire to acquit myſelf in a manner becoming my chriſtian profeſſion, I find myſelf, from a variety of motives (neither excuſable, nor yet, I think, abſolutely criminal), ſtrongly reluctant to avow my ſentiments explicitly before the world, and to ſecond them by that conduct which they ſhould ſeem to demand.

THEOPHILUS. The preſent ſtate of your mind, my dear friend, leaves your conformity to the worſhip of the eſtabliſhed church, or a ſilent, unobſerved, clandeſtine retreat from it, equally inexcuſable. Your laſt declaration amounts to a formal ſurrender of the queſtion; therefore, it now becomes more proper for me to leave you to your own reflections,

which

which cannot fail to determine you to adopt that open and upright conduct which will beſt advance the glory of God, and can alone meet with his approbation. Every day's continuance in your preſent indeciſion, adds danger and criminality to your ſituation. You will recollect the exhortation in the book of revelation, to quit Babylon, and I know that you allow the application: *come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that you receive not of her plagues.*

A mind like yours, informed by voluntary and patient inquiry (in the midſt of your prudent attention to your great ſecular concerns), will not long remain in your preſent reluctant and diſtreſſing inactivity. Where duty calls, I know your heart diſpoſes you to obey. And the ſame courſe of ſtudy which has diſcovered to you the truth, will have ſufficiently impreſſed you with its importance before all other conſiderations.

That knowledge which you have acquired, and which has le i you out of intellectual darkneſs, will naturally point out that line of conduct inſiſted upon in the goſpel, and which is made the condition of its promiſes. Having firſt convinced your underſtanding, it will animate your reſolution to walk in that plain direct road, which turns neither to the right hand, nor to the left. Nor will your high ſenſe of duty, or the goodneſs of your own heart, ſuffer you to reſt, until you have made the laſt advance in this

journey of religious and moral integrity, by ſhaking off every remaining ſhackle of religious bondage which any prejudice, timidity, or deference to others, may have faſtened around you. In the perfect love and fear of God, in ſtrict integrity and principle towards him, and in love and brotherly affection for all mankind, ſhall we alone find that peace of mind in this world, which is only to be exceeded by the happineſs of another.

EUGENIUS. Our friendly and improving converſation upon the important ſubject which has engaged our attention, and really intereſted our affection for each other, may now be cloſed, ſince we are both become of one mind. Mutual acknowledgments of kindneſs have been received, and returned, between us. And the reſult of your victory, is liberty to the vanquiſhed.

There requires ſo very little time to form a right deciſion of conduct, where the judgment is already convinced, and the mind is awakened to receive the force and impreſſion of truth, that I do not heſitate a moment to acknowledge my entire ſatisfaction in your arguments; and to aſſure you that I will, from this hour, withdraw myſelf from a church, whoſe foundation is laid in exacting impoſitions upon the conſciences of men, and whoſe conſtituent doctrine is idolatry.

There are, indeed, certain appendant circumſtances in every man's ſituation with reſpect to his

prejudices,

prejudices, habits, conſtitution, and connections, which cauſe him involuntarily to demur, where he ought inſtantly to decide. Theſe, however, are under command; and ſhall henceforth vaniſh and give way to ſuperior conviction and the obligations of truth.

Let theſe conſiderations excuſe the trouble I have given you, while your candid forbearance with them have greatly enhanced to me the value of your friendſhip, which, I truſt, will be uninterrupted to the end of our lives.

REASONS

FOR RESIGNING THE

RECTORY OF PANTON

AND

VICARAGE OF SWINDERBY,

IN

LINCOLNSHIRE;

AND QUITTING THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY JOHN DISNEY, D.D. F.S.A.

[Re-printed from the ſecond edition, 1783.]

REASONS

FOR QUITTING THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

A PUBLIC departure from my miniſtry in the eſtabliſhed church, and withdrawing myſelf from all attendance on its worſhip, ſhould ſeem not only to excuſe, but to demand, a declaration of the reaſons which have induced me to it, and made ſuch a conduct neceſſary.

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Theſe, and the like expreſſions, together with repeated and continued addreſſes by prayer to Jeſus Chriſt, and even to the holy ſpirit, inſtead of the one true God, who hath no equal, or ſharer, in the creation or government of the world, and who alone can hear the prayers of his creatures, are, according to my apprehenſion, in no way warranted by the word of God, as we read it in the old and new Teſtament, the only authority upon which, as chriſtians and proteſtants, we can depend. But on the contrary, they appear to be in direct oppoſition to the expreſs declarations of that Being, who declared himſelf, by Moſes, to be ONE LORD (Deut. vi. 4.), and of Chriſt himſelf, whoſe words, borrowed alſo from Moſes, are, *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* (Luke iv. 8.) And who, on all occaſions, prayed to, and called upon the one God, the common father of all, who was *his father and our father, his God and our God.* (John xx. 17.) And who alſo declared, that he *came not to do his own will, but the will of God who ſent him*; (chap. vi. 38.) that he honoured his father, and ſought not his own glory; that he wrought all his wonderful works, not by his own power, but by the power of God; and further, who, in order to prevent miſapprehenſions of his proper character, renounced the bare appellation of *good*, given to him by the ſcribe in the goſpel, ſaying, there was *none good but one*, and *that was God.* (Mark x. 18.)

Beſides

Beſides theſe particular, clear, and determinate authorities, my convictions of the divine unity are not founded upon ſingle and detached paſſages, but on the whole tenor of the ſacred ſcriptures, which ſpeak one uniform and conſiſtent language concerning it. *There is one God*, writes St. Paul, and *one mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus*; (1 Tim. ii. 5.) and all the declarations of Chriſt himſelf, and of all the writers of the new Teſtament, ſay the ſame thing.

It is indeed very true, and ought to be obſerved, that there are to be found expreſſions in the new Teſtament, which may ſeem, at firſt ſight, and even to ſome liberal perſons, to favour the conſidering Jeſus Chriſt as an object of divine worſhip; and whereby ſome may be induced to look upon him to be really and properly God. But all the countenance and aſſiſtance which the expreſſions of ſcripture alluded to give to ſuch a doctrine, is derived either from the ambiguous uſe of the term *worſhip*, or from other alike doubtful phraſes; or from the ſingle inſtance of the protomartyr Stephen; all which have been often demonſtrated by learned inquirers, to yield little ſatisfaction for the introduction of ſuch a new object of worſhip: and eſpecially when it is conſidered, that Chriſt never taught or enjoined men to worſhip himſelf, but the Father only; nor ever gave any inſtruction to his diſciples, to teach ſuch a doctrine to the world as that of worſhipping himſelf, their

maſter

maſter and *lord*, as he declares himſelf to be to them, but not their *God*. (John xiii. 13.)

Under theſe convictions, the road of duty lay plain before me, hard as the meaſure might ſeem; worldly conſiderations alone remained to prevent me from taking the direct path, and following the dictates of my conſcience. And theſe temptations I had in no ſmall degree. The juſt claims of an infant family pleaded hard not to be neglected. Nor could I refrain from thinking upon their ſituation with all the anxiety of parental affection, and, poſſibly, with more ſolicitude for their temporal proviſion, than the nature of my own difficulties ought to have admitted. I was agreeably ſituated in the circle of relations, and ſeveral eſteemed friends, and have lived in a conſtant kind intercourſe with all my pariſhioners, among whom I ever found my miniſtry acceptable. I had extended my uſefulneſs among my neighbours in all the ways I was able. Nor was I forward to think that I could be equally uſeful under any change of ſituation which removed me to a different ſphere of action. And I may add, that I was not inſenſible even to an acquired partiality to the place of my reſidence, where, on many accounts, and for reaſons of a private nature, I could have wiſhed to have continued, to the end of my life, in the enjoyment of every deſirable accommodation and comfort which a reaſonable mind could wiſh for.

Theſe conſiderations deſerved ſome thought, and they have had their full weight. But they are, after

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all, conſiderations of ſubordinate and inferior importance, when contraſted with the poſitive duty I owe to God, to the goſpel of Jeſus, to my fellow-chriſtians, and to myſelf.

It is no light matter to profeſs our religion in inſincerity and hypocriſy. We are enjoined by high authority to worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth. And ſhall worldly temptations prevail upon any one, who ſeriouſly profeſſes himſelf a chriſtian, to worſhip any other than the one true God, Jehovah, the Father of all, while he believes that ſame ſelf-exiſtent and all-powerful Being to be God, and none other beſides him? Or, ſhall we approach the great ſearcher of hearts with that duplicity and deceit which is not to be allowed in our dealings and intercourſe with our fellow men? Or, ſhall we think to amend the matter by addreſſing our *private* prayers to the God and Father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt, in compromiſe for our having *publicly* prayed, in the language of the church, to a trinity of Gods, or to *the man Chriſt Jeſus*, who lived among us, and died upon a croſs, and who himſelf renounced all adoration and worſhip? Shall we pray unto a man, though the moſt holy and excellent that ever lived on the earth, and thereby elevate the creature to the dignity of the creator, and take, from the unchangeable and only God and governor of the world, any of that praiſe and thankſgiving which we are enjoined to give unto him, and unto him only, and which are ſo peculiarly and eminently his own? Or, through our earneſt deſire

to

to continue in the eſtabliſhed church, ſhall we prove our faith by mental reſervations in the courſe of public worſhip, ſo that while we aſſent to one prayer, we reject another, or, poſſibly, divide a third, approving the former, and rejecting the latter part? Or, rather, ſhall we not, in all true ſimplicity and ſingleneſs of heart, as St. Paul writes, *pray with the ſpirit and pray with the underſtanding alſo?* (1 Cor. xiv. 15.)

I am ready to own, that my compliance in the uſe of thoſe things which I did not approve, was at one time relieved by the conſideration, that ſuch compliance was only official, or miniſterial. This argument, however, failed to afford ſatisfaction, on further reflection upon the ſtrict integrity and ſincerity abſolutely neceſſary for divine worſhip.

I never did read, in the public ſervice, the creed, vulgarly called the creed of Athanaſius, conſidering it, to ſay the leaſt, as entirely foreign to every good end of chriſtian edification. And it is now about ten years ſince I entirely omitted the litany and Nicene creed, without giving any offence to my congregation, confining the exerciſe of my miniſtry in the morning ſervice to my pariſh church of Swinderby, and an adjoining one in the county of Nottingham; thinking, at that time, that by taking upon myſelf the penalties of the law, I thereby releaſed myſelf from my engagement to conformity. This expedient of omitting ſome of the moſt offenſive parts of the public liturgy was afterwards ſuperſeded,

by

by conſidering my unconditional promiſe of conformity in a ſtronger point of view, than I had before beheld it.

But, beſides the force of this obligation, the remedy was in itſelf inſufficient, becauſe the trinitarian expreſſions and forms of worſhip, and expreſs prayer to Jeſus Chriſt, occur ſo frequently, and are ſo blended and united throughout the ſervice, that there is no ſatisfactory relief to be had by partial omiſſions, without breaking in upon, and interrupting, the regularity and order of the prayers, and conſequently diſperſing, or confounding, the pious affections of many ſerious and devout perſons. Therefore, after ſomething more than two years, I reſumed the accuſtomed conformity to the ordinary parts of the public ſervice.

From that time to the preſent I have continued to proſecute my inquiry, and have aſſiduouſly attended, in hopes of ſome ſatisfaction, to the many defences of the doctrine of the trinity. The reſult has, however, been my entire conviction of the divine unity in its utmoſt extent, and an increaſed ſenſe of the importance of theſe great truths, *that* GOD IS ONE, *and* HE ONLY *to be worſhipped.*

Under the accumulated influence of this fixed opinion, entertained after ſucceſſive examinations, under many doubts, and much anxiety of mind, my continuing to miniſter under a form of religious worſhip confeſſedly trinitarian, or tritheiſtic, became more ſeriouſly grievous. The earneſt deſire to

worſhip

worſhip the one God, and Father of all, in the ſimplicity of the goſpel revelation, gained additional ſtrength and power over my mind; and my continuance in a practice ſo repugnant to my convictions, was every day more and more intolerable.

It has been ſuggeſted, on ſimilar occaſions, that to engage an aſſiſtant, whoſe opinions would lead him to a conſcientious conformity to the ſervices of the church, would remove all perſonal difficulty. This expedient was alſo no leſs inſufficient to my relief than the former ones; for I ſhould then have been neglectful of my duty in the place appointed me; and indirectly aſſenting, by the employment of another, to that which I did ſtill diſbelieve. And I muſt then have abſented myſelf from all public worſhip of almighty God, or have entirely forſaken the people of whom I had taken the charge. And this I ſhould have done, for no better reaſon than becauſe I wiſhed to enjoy the emoluments of my preferment, while I ſcrupled to diſcharge the duties annexed to my ſituation; and ſhould have ſet an example of the moſt diſingenuous dealing, and of a neglect of the ordinances of God.

Thus, after the moſt deliberate conſideration of all arguments, and after paſſing ſeveral painful years in much ſolicitude and apprehenſion of incurring the diſpleaſure of almighty God, I had but one choice to make, if ever I hoped for his approbation. I, therefore, in obedience to the fulleſt convictions of my mind,

mind, have reſigned my miniſtry and preferments in the church of England.

I ſhould be much concerned, if any good man ſhould ſo interpret this receſſion of mine from the worſhip of the church eſtabliſhed, as if I thereby, in the moſt remote degree, took upon me to blame, or condemn, thoſe who may continue their miniſtrations in it, even though their opinions on certain doctrines may nearly approach to my own.

I am ſenſible, from what has paſſed within myſelf, how differently ſimilar convictions operate in different ſtates of the mind, and how very long a man may be prevailed upon to go on doing things in which he blames himſelf, from regards to a family, or to more diſtant kindred, and to various other local circumſtances, which cannot eaſily be explained to others; and the ſtill greater difficulty, at a certain time of life, of finding bread for a family any where elſe.

I am thankful now, and I truſt I ſhall always be ſo, whatever be the event as to this world, that I have been brought out of a ſituation, in which I went on, from day to day, condemning myſelf, and that it has pleaſed divine providence to lead me to a ſtation, where I may ſtill bear my teſtimony to the truth and holineſs of the goſpel, and have the ſatisfaction of being united to a congregation of chriſtians, aſſembling at the chapel of Eſſex-Street, London; where prayer is avowedly made to the only true God, the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and where I ſhall ſtill have more cauſe to be thankful, if my

labours may be ſo far ſucceſsful, that I may be an inſtrument of promoting his ſole worſhip, and at the ſame time, ſerve the great end of the goſpel, in encouraging and exciting myſelf and others to piety and all virtue.

I have been led to ſay thus much concerning myſelf, in order to ſtate the motives and reaſons of my finally quitting or departing from, the eſtabliſhed church; and to convince others, that ſuch my withdrawing from it, is not the conſequence of an haſty and undigeſted thought, but of much careful examination and ſerious reflection, and of an earneſt deſire to worſhip God, according to what I am now fully perſuaded is agreeable to his own directions in the ſcriptures. The difficulties and embarraſſments of my mind have, for a long time, been well known to ſeveral of my more intimate and much eſteemed friends. Nor have there been wanting ſome, who, while they felt for all my uneaſineſs, affectionately ſympathized alſo with me in reſpect of the many particular circumſtances which attended my ſituation, but which it is not neceſſary here to relate.

It may probably hence ariſe, that I may expoſe myſelf to ſome miſconſtruction and evil report, as even perſons the moſt unprejudiced in theſe matters, from the nature of the caſe, are unable to judge quite right, or decide for others. Nevertheleſs, I can ſafely ſay, that I take with me the moſt entire approbation of my own mind. And it is impoſſible ſo to regulate our conduct, as to ſatisfy the diſ-

cordant and contradictory opinions of mankind. I have complied with the eſtabliſhed forms of religious worſhip full as long as I could excuſe myſelf therein; ſo that my continuance in the church unto this time, and my preſent ſeparation from it, ſhould equally beſpeak a patient hearing, and candid judgment, from the firmeſt friend to the eſtabliſhed doctrines. Whatever names of reproach may be given on the preſent, or on ſimilar occaſions, I am well ſatisfied that there is no *guilty hereſy*, nothing wrong, in following the convictions of my own mind, after a full examination; and, moreover, that there would have been great hypocriſy in continuing any longer to conform to a mode of worſhip quite contrary to my convictions.

It has ever been my deſire and practice, in the courſe of my miniſtry, to explain the great truths of chriſtianity, and thence to enforce and preſs upon my hearers the moral duties of the goſpel, and the indiſpenſible neceſſity of a virtuous and holy life; to remind them, that to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and piouſly, in this preſent world, to fear God and keep his commandments, to love our neighbour, and aſſiſt him by all kind offices, are among the things firſt needful, and of the greateſt importance.

I make no doubt, but the time will come, when the forms of worſhip in the liturgy of the church of England will be corrected, and reduced nearer to the ſtandard of ſcripture. But, alas! this will not be the work of my day. This generation will probably

bably paſs away without ſeeing it. In the mean time, individuals muſt ſatisfy themſelves in their compliance with the preſent ſyſtem, according to their different apprehenſions of the truth of it, or ſeek their relief by peaceable retirement from a church, with which they are not agreed in the object of religious worſhip. In either of theſe caſes, there is no juſt occaſion given for reproach. The concern is perſonal, and confined to the conſcience of every individual; over which, neither the magiſtrate, nor any private perſons, ſingle or aſſociated, have any authority.

To you, the pariſhioners of Swinderby, among whom I have lived in entire harmony, and to whom my labours in the miniſtry have been chiefly devoted; to you, I would ſay in particular, that I leave you, my honeſt affectionate neighbours, with regret; but ſincerity towards God requires it, and this you will always think right, and to be followed. May you remember, and improve, by my late conſtant endeavours to inſtruct you according to the revealed will of God! I hope you will continue to go forward in the knowledge and obedience of the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, framing your lives and converſation by it, as I alſo will ſtrive to do; ſo ſhall we ſecure a meeting again in the future everlaſting kingdom of God, the father of all the families of the earth: To whom be glory, both now and for ever. Amen.

A

LETTER

TO THE

REVEREND MR. D——,

BY A LAYMAN.

1775.

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REV. SIR.

As, of late, I have not attended upon your miniſtry ſo conſtantly as heretofore; and as I have ſome ground to think that you judge me to be guilty of a fault in abſenting myſelf, you will permit me to aſſign a reaſon in juſtification of my conduct.

You are very ſenſible, ſir, that you and I differ very much in our religious opinions; ſo much, indeed, that I have heard you declare, that a perſon who thinks as I do, is, on that account, *excluded from ſalvation.* Such a declaration, however, affects me but little; knowing well, that the great and good God hath never ſo declared; and therefore eſteeming

the ſentence of any frail and fallible man as a thing of little moment. Though, by the way, it ſeems no trifling affair, with reſpect to the perſon himſelf, who places himſelf in the ſeat of judgment, and pronounces condemnation on his brother for his opinions. This man had need look well to his authority. And how if, in the end, it ſhould appear that the party ſo condemned, is one whom God *approves?* But to return:—The wide difference in our ſentiments, of neceſſity, prevents my gaining that profit from your miniſtry, which I would heartily wiſh to gain: and thus the principal deſign of public worſhip is defeated. How ſhould I be *profited* by what I am *ſhocked* and *grieved* to hear?—by that which the reverence which I owe to the ever bleſſed God obliges me to regard without abhorrence?—that at which I am really aſhamed to be ſhocked and grieved *no more*; as, indeed, I ſhould be, if I had ſuch a ſenſe of God upon my mind as I ought to have. Yet although I think ſo ill of your tenets, conſidered in themſelves, believing your *ſincerity* unqueſtionable, I do, at the ſame time, account you a good and a worthy man. Such is every man, who, according to his beſt judgment, practiſes what is right and good. Sincerity, ſir, is the *chief thing* in religion. You would think it ſo in a matter between you and your friend. And why not in religion? Becauſe, ſay you, the great God doth not judge as man judges. Now, as I apprehend this to be a capital miſtake, I will examine it a little; and

and what I ſhall ſay of it will be no improper introduction to what follows.

And ſurely, if the great God did not judge of good and evil as we judge, he would never have made this appeal to the wicked Iſraelites. "O houſe "of Iſrael! are not my ways equal? Are not your "ways unequal?"—It will be readily granted, that the thoughts and ways of the deity are, in one reſpect, far above our thoughts, and our ways. It would be very ſtrange if it were not ſo. The divine mind, ſeeing the whole compaſs of truth, and acting even to the extremeſt bounds of the univerſe, conſequently ſees and acts upon reaſons unknown to us. But, as all truth is *conſiſtent*, that which is unknown to us cannot be *oppoſite* and *contradictory* to that which is known. Shall we, then, ſay we know *nothing?* In this caſe would not our own hearts teſtify the falſity of our aſſertion? Shall we ſay that human reaſon was ſo totally perverted by the fall, that it only deceives us? And ſhall we *prove* this too? But how? Shall we prove by *reaſon* that reaſon is *deceitful?* The attempt has often been made: but certainly no abſurdity can be more groſs. Shall we prove it by ſcripture? But ſuppoſe we are aſked, "have you any "good *reaſon* to think the genuine ſenſe of the ſcrip"ture is ſuch?" What ſhall we anſwer? If we ſay *no*; in this caſe will not our conſciences condemn us, for *receiving* ſuch doctrine as the genuine ſenſe of ſcripture. If we ſay *yes*; is it not, then, manifeſt

that, in judging of the ſenſe of ſcripture, we are determined by *reaſon?* And thus is it not manifeſt, that the ſcriptural proof of *reaſon's deceitfulneſs*, is ultimately derived from *deceitful reaſon itſelf?* It is undeniably: and conſequently ſuch proof is *deceitful proof*, and cannot be depended upon. If we *do* depend upon it, in ſo doing we declare that *reaſon* is *not* deceitful, in direct oppoſition to the very tenet which we were intending to eſtabliſh. Pray attend to this. Indeed, ſir, it is very melancholy, to conſider how men have confounded and perverted a reaſonable nature. However, notwithſtanding all that has been urged to the contrary, it is abundantly evident, that we are endowed with capacities *to judge* aright, (within certain limits) even as the great God himſelf judges, concerning good and evil*. It is true we may *incapacitate* ourſelves, and then put the one for the other; and it ſeems *too true*, that this has been done by all who have perſuaded themſelves that human reaſon, as ſuch, is totally perverted; ſo as to be quite unable to judge concerning good and evil, or things of a religious nature.

Thus much, ſir, being premiſed, I now beg leave to mention thoſe doctrines of your's, to which I principally object, and the ground of my objections.

The

* Your contrary belief ſeems to have no other ſupport than the notion of *the deceitfulneſs of human reaſon*, reſulting from the fall, which notion has *nothing* to ſupport it.

The doctrines are, that of the trinity according to Athanaſius; the doctrine of original ſin; the doctrine of election and reprobation; the doctrine of the ſatisfaction, and that of imputed righteouſneſs.

The doctrine of the trinity, as Athanaſius and you repreſent it, appears to me utterly *abſurd* and *contradictory:* becauſe you repreſent the father, the ſon, and the ſpirit, as three ſeparate *agents*, each of them *God*, each of them *infinite:* and yet you ſay there is but *one* infinite God. You will not, ſurely, ſay the father, ſon, and ſpirit, are *not* three ſeparate *agents*; when, at the ſame time, you aſſert, that the father *ſent* the ſon into the world, who, in conſequence of being ſo ſent, *came* into the world, and *did* and *ſuffered* what is recorded of him: when, at the ſame time, you aſſert alſo, that the father *ſent* the ſpirit *in the name of the ſon*, and that the ſpirit, in conſequence of being ſo ſent, *came* into the world, and *convinced* mankind of ſin, &c. Surely, ſir, you will not ſay that the *ſender* and the *ſent*, he who *commands*, and he who *obeys*, are *not* ſeparate agents, but the *ſame**. Here then are three *agents*, each of whom you affirm to be infinite,

* Whenever you declare the ſon and ſpirit to be *equal* with the father, you do, in the very terms, acknowledge that their *exiſtence* is *ſeparate* from the father's *exiſtence*. You always conceive of things as *exiſting ſeparately*, when you think of their *equality:* you cannot help it if you would. But you may *impoſe* upon yourſelf.

infinite, each of whom you affirm to be God, and to each of whom, as to the Lord your God, you pay divine worſhip. Yet you ſay there is but *one* infinite God. And you ſay well: but you miſerably *contradict* yourſelf: and (however good your intention may be) you greatly *diſhonour* the eternal deity, who is *one infinite agent.*

The doctrine of original ſin, (according to you, ſir) ſeems to conſiſt of two parts:—In the firſt place, *guilt* derived from Adam's tranſgreſſion upon all his poſterity, whereby they are brought under the wrath and curſe of God, and are made liable to the torments of hell for ever *:—and, ſecondly, *the total corruption of their nature*; which is ſuch, that it renders them *ſinners by nature*, and *dead* in treſpaſſes and ſins; ſo dead, that they are no more able to do any thing *truly good*, than a dead *corpſe* is able to *ariſe and walk.*

With

* I believe, ſir, this is a true repreſentation of this part of your doctrine, which indeed you do not very much inſiſt upon: but I beg leave to enquire why you do not? Why don't you preach ſeveral entire ſermons to aſcertain, illuſtrate, and enforce it; that ſo your hearers may know the value of it, being convinced how worthy it is of the *infinitely good God* to torment the poſterity of Adam in hell fire for ever, not for *their own*, but for *Adam*'s trangreſſion? For my part I think you are obliged in conſcience thus to do, as you often proteſs that you account it your duty to declare *the whole counſel* of God.

With reſpect to the firſt of theſe articles, I would obſerve, that if we know any thing whatſoever, we know that it is *not juſt* to puniſh *one* man for the ſin of *another*. If it be aſked, "How do you know this?" In return, I aſk, how do you know that there is any thing *wrong*, or *inconſiſtent with juſtice*, in oppreſſions, murders, maſſacres, perjuries, blaſphemies? Suppoſe any one ſhould affirm that theſe things are very *innocent*. If you thought he deſerved any notice, I doubt not you would eagerly contradict him. Yet you could not do it without ſhewing your inconſiſtency: for that ſame reaſon which declares theſe things to be *eſſentially unjuſt*, is equally clear, full, and poſitive in declaring the *injuſtice* of puniſhing *one* man man for the ſin of *another*. If this be *right*, there is not the ſhadow of a reaſon for thinking thoſe horrid crimes to be *really criminal*. But we *know aſſuredly*, that oppreſſions, murders, maſſacres, perjuries, blaſphemies, are really and eſſentially *criminal:* and, in the ſame manner, and with equal certainty, we know that to puniſh *one* man for the ſin of *another*, neither *is*, nor *can* be juſt*. And, therefore, moſt ſincerely do

* I have heard you ſay, ſir,—you do not believe that infants are ſent into hell. But if they are *puniſhable* for the ſin of their firſt father, and if they are *actually puniſhed* in ſome degree why ſhould they not receive *the full puniſhment* which is due to them? And why was it, when we were talking of this matter, that you

do I *abhor* the doctrine which aſcribes ſuch a conduct to that righteous Being, whom I would always venerate and adore.

With reſpect to the ſecond article in this doctrine, (viz.) the entire *corruption* of the human nature, whereby men are rendered *ſinners by nature*, and utterly *incapacitated* to do any thing which is *truly good*, I would obſerve, that, if we conſider what ſin *is*, it will be found a contradiction to ſay a man is a *ſinner* by *nature*. You may as well ſay that it is ſinful for a man to have two *hands*, or two *feet*, as to ſay it is ſinful

you ſeemed *unwilling* to be thought a believer in the damnation of infants? I apprehend you were ſhocked [for you *ſtarted*] at the impious tenet. It was well. The great God intended you ſhould be ſhocked: and not at this tenet only, but alſo at ſeveral others which you believe and promulge. Indeed, he doth permit it to be otherwiſe. He endowed us with *liberty* (*i. e.* freedom of will) that we might be *accountable*. I would juſt take notice, here, that if we have *no* liberty, if nothing but actual ſin can proceed from our nature, as nothing but an impure ſtream can proceed from an impure fountain; then are actual ſinners (as you term them) and infants, upon the very ſame footing in reſpect of guilt; for theſe laſt were juſt as able to *prevent* the ſin of their *firſt father*, as the others were to *prevent* what you term *their own* actual ſins. I cannot give them that name; becauſe as actual ſin cannot ſubſiſt without *agency*, ſo neither without *liberty* can agency poſſibly ſubſiſt.

ſinful for him to have human *paſſions*, or any thing elſe which belongs to him as a man. But then may ſin be charged upon him, when he has knowingly and wilfully done the evil which he might have avoided, or *omitted* to do the good which he might have done. Till you can affirm either one or the other of him, you have no authority to call him a ſinner. And when through his negligence or bad conduct, he has *corrupted* himſelf, and *acquired evil habits*, you may ſay he is a ſinful and a wicked creature then, and not before. If this be the true account of ſin and ſinfulneſs, *a ſinful nature*, as ſuch, is plainly a contradiction. And can you, ſir, prove that it is *not* the true account? If you can, I really think there is nothing too hard for you.

But even though it were not *impoſſible in itſelf*, that the human nature, as ſuch, ſhould be morally corrupt and ſinful; yet, as it is *the work of God*, it muſt certainly be pure from all ſinful ſtain. You will tell me, perhaps, that it is *not* the work of God: but ſurely all nature, without exception, is his work. However, you inſiſt upon it, that the firſt man corrupted himſelf, and all thoſe who deſcend from him in the courſe of nature. But what, I beſeech you, is the courſe of nature? Without God it is *nothing*. By the powerful will of God all things were made: and that *will* is as needful for their *preſervation*, as it was for their *production*. "Hitherto the Almighty worketh:" his energy is felt throughout the univerſe, and the courſe of nature is the *effect* of that energy.

Summer

Summer and winter, ſeed-time and harveſt, the ſucceſſive generations of plants and animals, with all the infinite variety of events which take place in the natural world—All theſe are the *reſult* of that divine operation which never ceaſes. Adam could never have left any poſterity, if he had not been *empowered* by the will of God to propagate his ſpecies. If, then, he communicated a *ſinful nature* to his children, he was empowered by the divine will *ſo to do*. The truth is, every child receives its being and its nature from God, who conveys it by the inſtrumentality* of the parents; and the divine energy is as much concerned in producing the nature of every child which is born, as it was in producing the nature of the firſt man. Suppoſe this energy to *ceaſe*, and you certainly cannot imagine the courſe of nature to *continue*. Seeing, then, the human nature is *the work of God*, it *cannot* be a ſinful nature. And it is worthy of your conſideration, ſir, that the bible tells us it is *the*

* If a man has done an action which is ſinful, it cannot be denied that he was empowered by the divine will ſo to do: yet ſurely he dares not affirm, that, with reſpect to this ſinful action, he was *nothing more* than the inſtrument in God's hand. It *depends* on a man whether the nature of his actions ſhall be ſinful or otherwiſe. It depends *not* on him, whether the nature of his children ſhall be ſinful or otherwiſe. The nature of his action is *his own work*; the nature of his child is *God's work*.

the expreſs will of God, that the human nature ſhould be *ſuch as it is:* becauſe it acquaints us, that, *after the flood*, this command was delivered, "be fruitful and multiply."

The doctrine of election and reprobation aſſerts that, while a ſmall part of mankind was, from eternity, *predeſtinated* to enjoy everlaſting happineſs in the heavenly world, the greater part by far was alſo *predeſtinated*, by the ſame gracious God, to ſuffer everlaſting torments in hell fire.

That any man, whoſe underſtanding is not entirely *ruined*, ſhould believe this doctrine, would be to me a matter of the greateſt aſtoniſhment, if I were not yet more aſtoniſhed to think, that it is believed by ſome who do really venerate their maker. If it doth not carry its own refutation along with it, it muſt be owned there is little hope of its being refuted. However, I would obſerve two things in relation to it. Firſt, that if any one were about to utter the moſt horrid blaſphemy againſt the ever bleſſed God, he would be put to it to invent any thing worſe, *in kind*, than what is contained in this doctrine. Should he take the hint from it to affirm, that God *predeſtinated* all the creatures which he *hath* made, or in future *will* make, to ſuffer *everlaſting torments:* this would be only a greater *degree* of the ſame *kind* of blaſphemy. In the next place, I would take notice, that, when you ſay, "although "the great God hath, prior to their exiſtence, *pre-*

"*deſtinated* and *decreed* the greateſt part of mankind "to ſuffer everlaſting torments in hell, he is, never- "theleſs, infinitely *good* and *gracious*." I have good reaſon to think, that your heart *recoils*, and flatly *denies* what you utter with your tongue, though you *ſtrive hard* to believe it. I aſk you, ſeriouſly, ſir, is not ſuch the fact? And do not you impute it to the *natural wickedneſs* of your heart? I have no deſire that you ſhould anſwer me: but you will not do amiſs, perhaps, in delivering your anſwer to him who *made you*, and made you *what you are*; that you might naturally *ſhudder* at this horrid tenet, as you naturally *ſhudder* at the moſt atrocious and ſhocking crimes.

The doctrine of the ſatisfaction is this; that Chriſt died *in the room and ſtead* of ſinners, ſuffering a puniſhment equivalent to what was due to them, and thereby ſatisfied the law and juſtice of God. Now what do we underſtand by theſe words, puniſhment, law, juſtice? *Pain* and *puniſhment* ſeem to be very different things. The brute animals *ſuffer*, but are *not* puniſhed: for then, only, is a being puniſhed, when he *ſuffers for ſin charged upon him*. Law, in the preſent caſe, I take it to be an *authoritative edict*, preſcribing to, and enjoining upon, *its own ſubjects* right conduct, and denouncing a penalty againſt diſobedience. Juſtice is the ſame as righteouſneſs; it is eternal and immutable. Whatever is juſt and right, is ſuch in its own nature, it was always ſuch, and

ſuch it muſt remain for ever. Likewiſe, what- is unjuſt and wrong, is ſo in itſelf, eternally and ıutably. The great God, who is omniſcient, ws *all* that is right or wrong: and he, of his ıdant goodneſs, hath made us capable of the ſame wledge, *as far as is needful and proper for us.* He ı made us thus capable, in that he hath made us ɔnable beings. As ſuch, we underſtand and know, , to practice obedience to our maker's will, is *t.* We underſtand and know, it is *right* for a l, who has it in his power, to relieve and ſupport ıged parent in diſtreſs. And if a perſon return for good, we underſtand and know this to be *ng.* And whatever it be which reaſon pronounces, ı the ſame clearneſs, to be either juſt or unjuſt *it is.* Every man muſt grant this, unleſs he will ıt—he has *no reaſon* to think that to be juſt or un- which yet he *does* think to be ſo: I mean every who allows the *exiſtence* of juſtice and injuſtice. ere was always a righteouſneſs proper for every ɔnal being exiſting, or deſigned to exiſt. This ever bleſſed deity ſaw, and contemplated from laſting. This is what I underſtand by eternal immutable juſtice. It is founded on the *circum- ces* and *relations* of beings. To inſtance among elves of the human race:—Should a man be er a father or a ſon, his being ſo related as he is, es it juſt and right for him to do what does not ng to a perſon who is without children, or who loſt his parents. So riches, knowledge, wit, and

power, make a certain conduct to be juſt and right for their ſeveral poſſeſſors, which *cannot* be right for perſons *differently circumſtanced*. We have now, I believe, got the true meaning of the terms in queſtion. But if law be ſuch as hath been ſaid, how ſhall its demands be ſatisfied? It is exceeding plain, that they never can otherwiſe than by *a compliance* with what is demanded. The law requires of its *own ſubjects* this alternative, "*obey*, or *ſuffer the penalty*." Now, in either caſe, there is *compliance*, and, conſequently *ſatisfaction*. But if they neither *obey*, nor *ſuffer the penalty*, there is *no* compliance, and, conſequently, *no ſatisfaction*. It ſignifies nothing to ſay, that ſome perſon obeyed *in their ſtead*, or ſuffered *in their ſtead*. Neither the obedience nor the ſuffering of this perſon is what the law demands: each is *ſomething elſe*: it is *no* compliance, and therefore *cannot* be ſatisfaction. If you were to require *one* thing of me, and I were to give you *another*, it could never be ſaid that I had *ſatisfied your demand*. *You*, indeed, may be ſatisfied with ſomething different from what you required: *you* may be changed. But, if the *law* be changed, it will not be the law which we are conſidering. Indeed, it was never ſuppoſed to be changed.—It ſhould be remembered, however, that nothing can be more extravagant than to affirm any law to be *ſatisfied*, while its demands remain *unſatisfied*: and that theſe can only be ſatisfied by *a compliance* with what is demanded: and that, as the obedience and ſufferings of Chriſt are *no ſuch* compliance with what

the

the law of God demands, (which is the obedience or ſuffering of *its own ſubjects)* therefore Chriſt *hath not* ſatisfied the law of God, in the room and ſtead of ſinners.

And that juſtice cannot be ſatisfied by the vicarious puniſhment of an innocent perſon, is ſufficiently evident from this one conſideration---that juſtice abſolutely *forbids* to puniſh the innocent. This you acknowledge, when you ſay (in regard to ſickneſs and pain) that infants would not be *puniſhed*, if they were not *guilty*. However, you ſay, that as Chriſt *conſented* to endure puniſhment, that *conſent* rendered him in *juſtice puniſhable*. Did it then *take away* his innocence? Did it render him properly *criminal?* If not; how then could it make him *puniſhable?* Will you affirm, that it is in the *nature* of ſuch conſent ſo to do? And that *any* one who *conſents* to be puniſhed, is *puniſhable in juſtice?* Sure you will not. But if you do, I muſt contradict you, and declare, that a being is *not* puniſhable on account of his *conſent*, but only on account of his *crime*. It is really wonderful, that people ſhould imagine juſtice might be *ſatisfied* by what is a *violation* of juſtice.

With reſpect to the doctrine of imputed righteouſneſs, (viz.) that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is imputed to men, ſo as to become *their* righteouſneſs;---I would obſerve, that to impute or reckon to me what is not mine, is *wrong* imputation, or *wrong* reckoning; it is declaring a thing *to be* what it *is not*. Moreover, it

is impoſſible to make that right conduct *which I never performed*, to become *truly mine*, merely by *declaring* it ſo to be. Suppoſe a perſon in great affliction be by ſome other perſon relieved, and made eaſy and happy; and ſuppoſe it ſhould be generally reported that you relieved this diſtreſſed perſon, when you are conſcious that you have *not* done it: it is then imputed and reckoned to you: but it is a *wrong* imputation; and it is plainly and utterly impoſſible that this *deed* ſhould become *your* deed. Let who will *declare* it ſo to be, the matter is not altered hereby; and ſuch declaration muſt inevitably be *untrue*. There are ſome who underſtand this doctrine ſomewhat differently from what I have defined it to be; but you, ſir, I think, do not. Indeed, I take yours to be the true and proper idea of the doctrine: for if a perſon *only derive benefit* from Chriſt's righteouſneſs, there is *no* imputation in the caſe *.

I really ſhudder to reflect on the counterpart of this doctrine—the imputation of the ſins of men to the bleſſed ſon of God. But if you be a conſiſtent believer in imputed righteouſneſs, you *muſt* believe in ſuch imputation of ſins. Indeed, I hope you are not conſiſtent; for, if you be, you can have no objection

* You believe (if I do not miſunderſtand you) that if a man be *approved* of God, it is not on account of *his own righteouſneſs*, but on account of *the righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, with which the man is *adorned*, as with a glorious robe.

objection to that horrid aſſertion, which I dare ſay you are not unacquainted with (viz.) that the great God turned away his face from his expiring ſon as from *an abominable object*. This tenet is by no means compatible with the idea of the *innocent* enduring puniſhment inſtead of the *guilty*: but I am not ſurpriſed at the inconſiſtency.

Yet all theſe doctrines, you think, are warranted by the word of God. And do you really think, ſir, that the ſacred word can warrant ſuch doctrines as theſe? I think myſelf well authoriſed to declare them abſurd, impoſſible, impious—and, therefore, *falſe*. If you deny the charge, you ſhould prove the contrary: which if you do, you will perform great and eminent ſervice for the cauſe in which you are embarked. Till this is effected, either by you or ſomebody elſe, I muſt think it is not doing the word of God much real honour, to ſay, as you do, that theſe doctrines are not only warranted by it, but are the principal and moſt excellent doctrines which it delivers to us. I ſincerely bleſs God, that he hath taught me to put a much better, and a more natural interpretation upon his word, which has been lamentably obſcured by the gloſſes of both ill-meaning and well-meaning perſons. And, as I eſteem the revelation which God has given us in the ſcriptures to be an invaluable treaſure, I am very ſorry to ſee it ſo ſadly perverted, as to be made to countenance opinions which are a reproach to religion. Such

opinions

opinions (pardon me, ſir,) I muſt hear, and little elſe, if I attend upon your miniſtry. I muſt hear the moſt unworthy and degrading repreſentations of the glorious deity, and, what is ſtill worſe, I muſt hear injuſtice and cruelty charged indirectly upon him who is perfectly juſt and infinitely benevolent. I muſt hear another, repreſented as *equal* to him who is declared to be "the ONLY true God;" and who himſelf hath, in his own perſon, ſaid---"I am God, and there is none elſe." I muſt hear prayers, (in which I would not join for the whole world) wherein penitent confeſſion is made to him who created and formed us of a *ſinful nature*, and *a heart naturally full of wickedneſs:* I muſt hear this confeſſion, inſtead of a devout thankſgiving for thoſe intelligent and moral faculties, whereby we are made capable of religious and heavenly felicity. And I muſt hear praiſe and thanks aſcribed to the ever bleſſed God, for ſatisfying juſtice by that which his ſoul muſt utterly abhor—by *the puniſhment* of his holy, and innocent, and beloved ſon, &c. &c. Sir, I am *ſhocked* and *grieved* to hear theſe things.

I have a little more to add, and I have done. I cannot help obſerving a very remarkable difference between your preaching, and that of many whoſe principles are a good deal ſimilar to your own. Theſe perſons judging, that although men are naturally corrupt, they are *moral* agents ſtill; and judging, moreover, that the goſpel hath revealed nothing more plainly

plainly than this truth;—" that the preſent ſtate is a " ſtate of *trial* and *diſcipline*, having reſpect to " another ſtate, where we are to be dealt with, ac- " cording to our behaviour in this;"—they do generally explain and enforce thoſe *duties* which are required of us, inſiſting on the various arguments and motives drawn from the nature of things, as well as thoſe peculiar to the goſpel. Now, it is true, ſir, I have heard you acknowledge, that the preſent ſtate is a ſtate of trial; but your preaching totally *excludes* this truth: for you deny the moral agency of mankind; affirming, that men are no more able to do any thing *truly good*, than a dead *corpſe* is able to ariſe and walk; and one great part of your buſineſs is to deſcribe the *miſery* and *ſinfulneſs* of this which you call our *natural ſtate*. Inſtead of counſelling your hearers (as was the apoſtle Paul's manner) to " labour that they may be accepted of God: becauſe " we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of " Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done " in his body, according to what he hath done, " whether it be good or bad:" you tell them that, if they have the ſmalleſt portion of *true grace* (which, you aver to be ſovereign, *i. e.* arbitrary) they ſhall certainly be ſaved; but if they are never ſo happy as to be made partakers of this *grace* (which, being ſovereign, doth not at all depend upon any thing they can do) they muſt inevitably be loſt. That is—thoſe who are loſt, are loſt *for want of grace*; and not be-

cauſe

cauſe they *did* the evil which they *might have avoided*, and *omitted* to do the good which they *might have done**. You tell them, further, that they muſt never expect to *recommend* themſelves to God by any thing they can perform. A piece of doctrine which doth not ſeem to correſpond very well, either with the paſſage juſt quoted, or with the exhortation of the ſame apoſtle, addreſſed to the Theſſalonians, as follows—" We " beſeech you, brethren, and exhort you by the lord " Jeſus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought " to walk, and to *pleaſe* God, ſo ye would abound more and more." And yet it muſt be owned, that you expreſs great diſapprobation of the conduct of ſuch as think to be accepted of God, *without* the practice of what is good. I look upon this as a very *happy* inconſiſtency, reſulting from the principles of that nature, which (however you may depreciate and vilify it) is *the excellent workmanſhip* of God, his rich and invaluable *gift*.

A manner of preaching ſo very oppoſite to this leading doctrine of the goſpel—that we ſhall be dealt with according to our behaviour in the preſent ſtate of *trial* and *diſcipline*---appears to me ſo contrary to the intention of preaching, that it is not likely I ſhould

* You may poſſibly ſay, with ſome, that wicked men can abſtain from evil, and do good, if they *will*; while yet you affirm they *cannot* will. But ſurely a man cannot *do* what he cannot *will* to do. To tell him he can, is to inſult him.

ſhould receive much benefit from it: eſpecially it is not likely, as I conſider it liable to the preceding objections.

And now, ſir, I have given you my reaſons for non-attendance upon your miniſtry. It is not becauſe I have a *diſlike* to public worſhip. So far from it, I cannot help thinking it a misfortune to be thus debarred from what I eſteem a great and deſirable privilege. I ſhould rejoice to join with my fellow-chriſtians in ſuch worſhip as I think agreeable to the true ſpirit of chriſtianity: but were I to join with *you*, I ſhould, *in many inſtances*, wrong my conſcience: and in barely giving attendance, I cannot avoid being *hurt*, more or leſs, by what I hear. When I do attend, I endeavour to make the moſt of what I approve, join in the worſhip where I *can*, and pay a particular regard to your ſincerity and upright meaning. If it ſhould be aſked, why I attended conſtantly ſo long; I did it, becauſe I was afraid of ſetting a bad example, or rather what might be ſo conſtrued. But, on further conſideration, there ſeems no great reaſon to fear this, as it is well known, that I do not make the day a day of *pleaſure*: and I hope, and am perſuaded, that my abſence is not ſuſpected to proceed from a *diſregard to religion*.

In this letter, ſir, I have not ſcrupled to declare my ſentiments of your opinions with a great deal of *frankneſs*: you may poſſibly think, *too much*. But the caſe required it. And I doubt not you would have

have been as free with my principles, if you had written to me on the ſubject.---I had in view the honour of God, and the chriſtian religion, as well as the juſtification of my own conduct. I aſſure you, that I neither intended, nor do intend, any thing like hoſtility: for, however much I may think you *miſtaken*, as a man I eſteem and reſpect you; and have not deſignedly failed to *ſhew* my reſpect upon proper occaſions, when you were either preſent or abſent. I now beg leave to offer you my beſt wiſhes, and ſubſcribe myſelf,

Reverend ſir,

Your real friend,

and very humble ſervant.

AN

EXHORTATION

TO ALL

CHRISTIAN PEOPLE,

TO REFRAIN FROM

TRINITARIAN WORSHIP.

We preach unto you, that ye ſhould turn unto the LIVING GOD, who made heaven and earth and the ſea, and all things that are therein. Acts xiv. 15.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the following addreſs, great uſe is made of a tract entitled, "A free and ſerious addreſs to the chriſtian laity, eſpecially thoſe, who, being of unitarian ſentiments, conform to trinitarian worſhip," which is aſcribed to Mr. Toulmin, of Taunton. The words of other authors, as quoted by that writer, are alſo in ſome places adopted, without any reference being made to them.

[Re-printed from the ſecond edition, 1789.]

PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

THE writer of the following addreſs is unwilling to let a ſecond edition of it appear, without attempting to point out the inconſiſtency of thoſe who have expreſſed their approbation of the ſentiments it contains, whilſt they continue to join in trinitarian worſhip. It was not drawn up ſo much with the view of expoſing the errors of the book of Common-prayer, as of prevailing upon you, who are ſenſible of thoſe errors, to diſcontinue the uſe of devotional forms, which you look upon as inconſiſtent with the ſcriptures. Be intreated, brethren, carefully and ſeriouſly to review the conſiderations which are laid before you in this little tract. Carry in your minds, whilſt you are reading it, that *you* are the perſons principally addreſſed. Apply every *argument*—for religion is a *perſonal* concern---apply every argument to *yourſelves*. Examine them carefully, and inquire if you can be juſtified in treating them with neglect. Do not trifle with yourſelves. Beware of admitting any vain plea, as a ſufficient apology for your acting inconſiſtently

ſiſtently with your convictions. Will you ſay that you are advanced in life---that your habits are fixed---that it is too late for you to think of forſaking the ways to which you have been accuſtomed from your infancy? And do you really think that ſuch an excuſe will be admitted by the great ſearcher of hearts? An excuſe for what? For acting as an hypocrite, and for ſupporting thoſe groſs corruptions of the goſpel which rob it of its beautiful ſimplicity, and prove an inſurmountable ſtumbling-block in the way of unbelievers of every denomination. If ſuch an apology will acquit you, it will acquit the greateſt ſinner upon earth; for ſuch an one can plead that his habits are of too long a ſtanding for him to root them up. The fact, however, is, that this conſideration, inſtead of excuſing him, will ſerve to aggravate his guilt and increaſe his puniſhment. Trifle, therefore, no longer —no longer confeſs the truth in words, whilſt in actions you deny it: aſſert the fairneſs and ſimplicity of your characters. Let the promiſe of our lord to thoſe diſciples who ſhould act a conſiſtent part, animate you to ſurmount the difficulties which lie in your way. "He that findeth his life ſhall loſe it, and he that loſeth his life for my ſake ſhall find it." Matt. x. 39. In the preſent happy times, the friends of the truth have not thoſe dreadful hardſhips to encounter, which in former days fell to the portion of thoſe who ſtood forth in oppoſition to prevailing errors. But ſtill, if you act agreeably to your convictions, you muſt

muſt expect to meet with ſome reproach and oppoſition. "In the world we muſt have tribulation: but let us be of good cheer: our lord hath overcome the world." Let his example encourage us. Let us be neither terrified from bearing an unwavering teſtimony to the truth, nor irritated againſt thoſe who may condemn us. Ere long they may become our firmeſt friends. And if it be otherwiſe, let us not render evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwiſe bleſſing---in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves. This is by no means inconſiſtent with the moſt determined zeal for the truth. Let us always remember that it is not the *men*, but their *errors*, that we are to oppoſe. Of the men, let us endeavour to think as charitably as poſſible. Let us avoid putting the moſt unfavourable conſtruction even upon their heat and violence. Let us not be ever ready to impute that behaviour to mere malice, which may really ſpring from a ſincere attachment to what they believe to be the truth. One ſhould hope that the violence of perſecutors may ſometimes be aſcribed to the miſtakes of the head, and not to the depravity of the heart. I truſt that ſome of thoſe who would draw the ſword againſt us on earth, will rejoice to meet us in heaven.

But whilſt you exerciſe the greateſt candour towards thoſe who differ from you, permit me to recommend it to you to take every opportunity of attempting to correct their errors, and to give them juſter

notions of the chriſtian religion. You, who have been educated conformiſts, muſt enjoy many opportunities of doing this, which do not fall in the way of thoſe whoſe connections naturally lie among diſſenters from the eſtabliſhed church. You likewiſe are better able to enter into the feelings of churchmen than they are, and can afford a more unequivocal evidence, that a regard to truth, and to conſiſtency of character, has really ſome practical influence upon your own minds.

And whilſt you are thus exerting yourſelves let the excellence of your conduct be anſwerable to the warmth of your zeal. Thoſe who greatly intereſt themſelves in matters of religion, are always watched by the world with the moſt critical exactneſs, and are expected to live under the influence of that religion, about which they appear ſo much concerned. Let your light, then, ſo ſhine before men, that they, ſeeing your good works, may glorify your father who is in heaven.

AN

EXHORTATION

TO REFRAIN FROM

TRINITARIAN WORSHIP.

MY CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

IT is upon a matter of great importance that I am now about to addreſs you. I truſt you will pay all poſſible attention to what I am going to ſay. May God almighty give you a ſerious, unprejudiced mind! May he open your eyes to the truth as delivered by the bleſſed Jeſus! May he enable you to obey the dictates of your conſciences, and to follow your honoured and beloved maſter, through evil report, or through good report, through life or through death! It is under a ſenſe of the preſence of the great God and, I truſt, with a view to his honour and glory, that I now exhort you to turn from the worſhip of thoſe who are *called* gods, whether in heaven or in earth, and to confine your religious homage to that ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things*.

You know, my brethren, it was foretold by the apoſtles, that there ſhould be a great falling away from the ſimplicity of Chriſt, and that the goſpel, that

* 1 Cor. viii. 5.

that precious jewel, ſhould be greatly tarniſhed, in paſſing through the polluted hands of men. Their prophecy was remarkably fulfilled. Chriſtianity was quickly disfigured. It was but about two hundred and fifty years ago, that thoſe doctrines which we term the errors of popery, were firmly held by almoſt all the chriſtian church: and when our forefathers began to diſcover their miſtakes, the corruptions of chriſtianity had gained ſo firm a footing, and had been eſtabliſhed ſo many hundred years, that old goſpel truths were looked upon by moſt men as mere novelties, and nothing was more common than for the catholics to cry out upon the proteſtants, "Where was your doctrine before Luther aroſe? Where was your church before king Edward's days?"

It was not to be expected, that men ſhould at once obtain an unclouded view of chriſtianity; that they ſhould at once ſee through all the errors which had been collecting together for more than a thouſand years. Accordingly, though (in the midſt of much inſult and oppoſition) they removed a great deal of rubbiſh from the fair goſpel building, they ſuffered no ſmall quantity to remain: though they attacked, with all their might, one ſpecies of idolatry, they ſtrained every nerve to ſupport another, perſecuting unto death thoſe who would worſhip no other being than the one GOD and Father of all. So generally has the doctrine of three eternal perſons (each of whom is

ſaid

ſaid to be God) been received, even by proteſtants, that I ſhould not wonder if ſome of you, my friends, for want of knowing better, ſhould follow the example of the catholics, and charge us, who deny that doctrine, with introducing novelties: though it has been proved, to the ſatisfaction of many worthy chriſtians, that the *body of believers*, for the ſpace of more than two hundred years after Chriſt, held that the *Father only is* GOD, and that the lord Jeſus was nothing more than his highly favoured ſon and meſſenger*. This is very different from the doctrine of the church of Rome, of England, or of Scotland. How widely theſe churches have deviated from the faith of the holy ſcriptures, as well as from the practice of Jeſus and his apoſtles, with regard to religious worſhip, you will be able to form ſome judgment from the following contraſt.

* The heads of the argument to prove this point, may be ſeen in a little pamphlet, entitled, "A general view of the arguments for the unity of God, and againſt the divinity and pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, from reaſon, from the ſcriptures, and from hiſtory." But thoſe who wiſh to ſee the queſtion fully canvaſſed, will peruſe the controverſy between Dr. Prieſtley and Dr. Horſley, &c.

DIRECTIONS *relative to the* OBJECT *of worſhip, with ſpecimens of* PRAYERS—*of devout* WISHES, *&c.*

Found in the CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES.

"Thou, when thou prayeſt, pray to thy FATHER, who is in ſecret, and thy FATHER, who ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly. After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our FATHER, who art in heaven."—Matt. vi. 6, 9. Luke ix. 2.

"Jeſus ſaith—the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the FATHER in ſpirit and in truth, for the FATHER ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip HIM." John iv. 23. See alſo John

Found in the BOOK *of* COMMON PRAYER, *and in the writings of* PRESBYTERIANS *and other* DISSENTERS.

"The catholic faith is this, that we worſhip one God in trinity and trinity in unity.—*Athanaſian creed.*

"Then likewiſe the miniſter ſhall ſay, Glory be to the Father, and to the ſon, and to the holy ghoſt; Anſwer, As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever ſhall be, world without end*."—*Morning ſervice.*

"Above all things, ye muſt give moſt humble

* *Pope Damaſus* is ſaid to have decreed, in a Roman council, that glory to the Father, and to the ſon, and to the holy ghoſt, ſhould be ſaid or ſung at the end of the pſalms. This was in the latter part of the fourth century.

om the Scriptures.

13, 14. xv. 16. 23.

I bow my knees the FATHER of ord Jeſus Chriſt, of ›M the whole family ieaven and earth is ed." Eph. iii. 14,

Giving thanks al- , for all things unto ', even the FATHER, e name of our lord ; Chriſt." Eph. v. See alſo ch. ii. 18. i. xv. 6. Col. i. 3, ch. iii. 17. James . 1 Pet. i. 17*.

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

and hearty thanks to God the Father, the ſon and the holy ghoſt, for the redemption of the world, &c." *Communion ſervice.*

" It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we ſhould, at all times and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord! almighty and everlaſting God, who art one God, one lord; not *one only perſon, but three perſons*, in one ſubſtance. For *that* which we believe of the glory of

It is ſaid, Heb. i. 6. " when he bringeth in the ·ſt begotten into the world, he ſaith, and let al e angels of God worſhip him :" and we read of cular perſons worſhipping our lord. But it is known that by the term *worſhip* is not always it *religious* adoration. It is frequently uſed to ibe thoſe marks of reſpect which are paid to great ſters. Some of the perſons who are ſaid to have hipped Jeſus, (Matt. viii. and ix. 18.) were jews. the jews paid *religious* worſhip to GOD only. Indeed

From the Scriptures.

" At that time Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, I thank thee, O FATHER, lord of heaven and earth, becauſe THOU haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

father, *the ſame** we believe of the ſon, and of the holy ghoſt, without any difference or inequality." *Upon the feaſt of trinity.*

Indeed I ſhould imagine that few trinitarians themſelves will aſſert that at the period when the leper or the ruler worſhipped (or made obeiſance to) Jeſus, the doctrine of his deity was publicly taught. Conſequently that worſhip had nothing in it of a religious nature.

It is ſaid, 1 Chron. xxix. 20. " All the congrega-" tion worſhipped the lord and the king:" and in Daniel ii. 46. " that Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face " and *worſhipped* Daniel, and commanded that they " ſhould offer an oblation (or preſent) and ſweet odours " unto him," as a mark of reſpect, agreeable to the eaſtern method of doing perſons honour. Jeſus alſo, ſpeaks of a ſervant who fell down before his maſter, and *worſhipped* him. Matt. xviii. 26. When therefore we read that the *leper worſhipped* Jeſus—that his diſciples, upon his aſcenſion, worſhipped him, &c. it is reaſonable to underſtand it as meaning nothing more, than that they did him homage, as a great character, or as a divine prophet. You will be confirmed in this, upon finding that all their religious addreſſes were directed to the one GOD, the Father of Jeſus.

* If ye loved me, ſaid the lord Jeſus to his diſciples, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto the Father: *for my Father is* GREATER *than* I. John xiv. 28.

rom the Scriptures.

ient, and haſt revealed
n unto babes: even
ATHER, for ſo it
ied good in THY
:." Matt. xi. 25,
Luke x. 21.

And he—fell on his
and prayed, ſaying,
IY FATHER, if it be
ble let this cup paſs
n me: nevertheleſs
as *I* will but as THOU
." Matt. xxvi. 39.
Mark xiv. 36. Luke
. 42. xxiii. 34. 46.

And Jeſus lift up his
and ſaid, FATHER I
k thee that THOU
heard me." John xi.

Now is my ſoul
bled, and what ſhall
, FATHER ſave me
n this hour? but for
cauſe came I unto
hour. FATHER, glo-
thy name." John xii.
28.

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

"Religious worſhip is to be given to God the father, the ſon, and the holy ghoſt; and to him alone." *The Aſſembly's confeſ. of faith*, ch. 21.

"The ſecond part of prayer is adoration, and it contains (1.) A mention of his nature as God; and this includes his moſt original properties and perfections: his unity of eſſence, that there is no other God beſides him: his inconceivable ſubſiſtance in three perſons, the father, the ſon, and the holy ſpirit; which myſtery of the trinity is a moſt proper object of our adoration and wonder ſince it ſo much ſurpaſſes our underſtanding."—— *Watts's Guide to prayer*, p. 6.

"We muſt give honour to three perſons in

From the Scriptures.

" Holy FATHER, keep, through thine own name, thoſe whom THOU haſt given me." John xvii. 11. See alſo John xvii. 1, 3, 5, 13, 24, 25, and Acts iv. 24, &c.

" Bleſſed be GOD, even the FATHER of our lord Jeſus Chriſt, the FATHER of mercies and the GOD of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation." 2 Cor. i. 3. See alſo Eph. i. 3.

" Bleſſed be the GOD and FATHER of our lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead." 1 Peter i. 3.*

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

the godhead diſtinctly: to the Father, the ſon, and the holy ghoſt." *Henry's Method of prayer.*

" Thou art the king of glory, O Chriſt. Thou art the everlaſting ſon of the Father." " We therefore pray thee to help thy ſervants, whom thou haſt redeemed with thy precious blood.—Make them to be numbered with thy ſaints in glory everlaſting." *Te Deum.*

" O God the ſon, redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us miſerable ſinners.

" O God the holy ghoſt, proceeding from the father and the ſon, have mercy upon us miſerable ſinners.

* We read, Acts vii. 59. that " they ſtoned Stephen calling *(upon God* is not in the original) and ſaying, Lord Jeſus receive " my ſpirit," or breath of life, as

if

From the Scriptures.

" According to the will of GOD, the FATHER, to whom be glory for ever and ever." Gal. i. 4, 5.

" Now unto GOD, even our FATHER, be glory for ever and ever." Phil. iv. 10.

" Now unto the king eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe GOD, be honour and glory for ever and ever." 1 Tim. i. 17. See alſo Matt. vi. 13. Luke ii. 14. Rom.

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

" O holy, bleſſed, and glorious trinity, three perſons and one God, have mercy upon us miſerab ſinners.

" Whom thou haſt redeemed with thy moſt precious blood. By the myſtery of thy holy incarnation; by thy holy nativity and circumciſion; by thy baptiſm, faſting and temptation; by thy agony and bloody ſweat; by thy croſs and paſſion; by thy precious death and burial;

if he had ſaid, " accept this ſacrifice of my life which " I lay down for thy ſake." Stephen had juſt ſeen the heavens opened, and the ſon of man ſtanding at the right hand of God. The impreſſion made by ſo grand a ſpectacle would not quickly wear off. Is it wonderful then that he ſhould addreſs that ſon of man? When we are in ſimilar circumſtances, it is to be preſumed that we may do the ſame. Paul ſays to Timothy, 1 Tim. i. 12. " I thank Jeſus Chriſt our lord." But we may expreſs our thankfulneſs towards any abſent friend and benefactor, without directly addreſſing, much more without worſhipping, that friend.

From the Scriptures.	*From the Com. Prayer, &c.*
i. 25. xi. 33, 36. xvi. 25, 27. 2 Cor. xi. 31. Eph. iii. 20, 21. 1 Tim. vi. 14, 15, 16. 1 Peter v. 10, 11. Jude 24, 25, Rev. iv. 8, 11. vii. 11, 12.*	by thy glorious reſurrection and aſcenſion; and by the coming of the holy ghoſt.
" Grace be to you and peace from GOD, our	" Son of God we beſeech thee to hear us.
	" O lamb of God, that takeſt away the ſins of the world, have mercy upon

* There are in ſcripture a few aſcriptions of praiſe and glory to the lord Jeſus, 2 Peter iii. 8. Rev. i. 5, 6. v. 9, 11, 12, 13. vii. 9, 10. but not one, as if he were the great God. Indeed, they are not *addreſſed* to him, as if he were ſuppoſed to be preſent, except in the Revelation, c. v. and vii. where he is repreſented as being actually before the angels who addreſs him. It ſhould alſo be obſerved that he is there addreſſed as the *lamb that was ſlain*, as a creature capable of dying, which can never be ſaid of the eternal, unchangeable Jehovah. Indeed, they addreſs him as a Being entirely diſtinct from God; " thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redemed " us to God." v. 9. If he be joined with God in this act of praiſe, it is no more than David was. " All " the congregation bowed down their heads, and wor- " ſhipped the lord and the king." 2 Chron. xxix. 20. Honour will be due to the holy Jeſus, but not religious worſhip.—Rom. ix. 5. may be tranſlated—" the " GOD over all (the ſupreme GOD) be bleſſed for " ever."

From the Scriptures.

FATHER, and the lord Jeſus Chriſt." Rom. i. 7.

" Grace, mercy, and peace, from GOD, the FATHER, and Jeſus Chriſt our lord." 1 Tim. i. 2.

" Grace be with you, mercy and peace from GOD the FATHER, and from the *lord* Jeſus Chriſt, the ſon of the FATHER, in truth and love." 2 John 3.

" Grace be unto you, and peace, from HIM who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the ſeven ſpirits*, who are before the throne—and from Jeſus Chriſt, who is the faithful witneſs, and the firſt-begotten from the dead,

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

us. O Chriſt hear us. Lord have mercy us. Chriſt have mercy upon us. Lord have mercy upon us.—From our enemies defend us O Chriſt. O ſon of David have mercy upon us. Graciouſly hear us, O Chriſt; graciouſly hear us, O lord Chriſt." *Litany.*

" For thou only art holy, thou only art the lord: thou only, O Chriſt, with the holy ghoſt, art moſt high in the glory of God the Father." *Communion Service.*

" Now unto the king eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, and our God in three perſons, father, ſon, and holy ghoſt, be honour and glory, dominion and praiſe, hence-

* This expreſſion ſhews that this and the three preceding paſſages ſhould be conſidered only as *pious wiſhes* and not *prayers*, for ſurely the writer would not pray to the ſeven ſpirits.

From the Scriptures.

and the prince of the kings of the earth." Rev. i. 4, 5. See alſo Rom. xvi. 20, 24. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. xiii. 14. Gal. i. 3. vi. 18. Eph. i. 2. vi. 23. 24. Phil. i. 2. iv. 23. Col. i. 2. iv. 18. 1 Theſſ. i. 1. iii. 11. 12. v. 23, 28. 2 Theſſ. i. 2. ii. 16, 17. iii. 5. 16, 18. 2 Tim. i. 2, 18. iv. 22. Titus i. 4. iii. 15. Philem. iii. 25. Heb. xiii. 20, 25. 1 Peter i. 2. v. 10, 14. 2 Peter i. 2. Jude 2. Rev. xxii. 21.

From the Com. Prayer, &c.

forth and forever. Amen." —*Henry on Prayer.*

" ——Through Jeſus Chriſt our lord; to whom with thee, O Father, and thine holy ſpirit, be everlaſting praiſes." *Doddridge.*

" Jeſus, my God, thy blood alone,
Hath power ſufficient to atone."
Watts, Pſ. l. 51.

" To God the Father, God the ſon,
And God the ſpirit, three in one,
Be honour, praiſe and glory given,
By all on earth and all in heaven."
Watts's Doxology.

See alſo Pſ. xix. long metre, ver. 5, 6. pſ. xlv. c. cx. cxviii. &c.

" God the Father, God the ſon, and God the holy ghoſt, bleſs, preſerve and keep you." *Matrimony.*

BRETHREN, before I proceed, ſuffer me to aſk you, if you have carefully conſidered the paſſages, which have been laid before you? Have you read them over with attention? Have you endeavoured to read them with impartiality? Have you prayed to almighty God, that he would not ſuffer you to be carried away by groundleſs prejudices—that he would open your eyes to his truth?

Brethren, it is no trifling matter. It is a very ſerious queſtion, whether we be to worſhip one divine perſon, or three divine perſons—one God, or three Gods. Have you, then, really peruſed the above contraſt with that ſerious attention, which the ſubject calls for? I do not pretend to have produced every *prayer*, or *devout wiſh*, or *doxology* to be met with in the New Teſtament. But I believe there are but few, which are neither copied, nor referred to. One ſhould hope you will not think it too much trouble to turn to thoſe places in your bible, to which you are referred, and to thoſe alſo, of which the words are given, that you may be ſatisfied one has quoted them fairly, and alſo ſelected ſuch as are proper ſpecimens of the whole.—Suppoſing that you have done this, and are ſatisfied; permit me to inquire, if you do not think, that there is a very ſtriking difference between the ſcripture plan of worſhip, and the church of England plan*? Do you not think that the lord Jeſus

* Though the church of *England* only is expreſsly mentioned here, and in other places in this addreſs; yet

Jeſus and his apoſtles prayed very differently from the members of our eſtabliſhed church? Jeſus and his apoſtles prayed to the FATHER, and to no other. He who is guided by the Engliſh liturgy, prays to God the Father, God the ſon, and God the holy ghoſt, to "the holy, bleſſed, and glorious trinity." The former worſhipped *one* being: the latter worſhipped *three* perſons or beings†. The former, therefore, and thoſe

yet the ſame obſervations which are made to ſhew that it is the duty of unitarians to leave *that* church, are generally applicable to trinitarian churches among the *diſſenters*.

† When trinitarians aſſert that the Father is God, the ſon God, and the holy ghoſt God, they muſt mean that the terms father, ſon, and holy ghoſt, are three different *names* of the *ſame* being, or that they are expreſſive of *three diſtinct beings*. If they mean that they are only different *names* of the *ſame* being, it is difficult to ſee in what reſpect they differ from unitarians, except in uſing a language, which is very liable to be miſunderſtood. But if they mean that the terms Father, ſon, and holy ghoſt, are expreſſive of *three diſtinct beings*, each of whom is God, is it not undeniable that they aſſert the exiſtence of THREE GODS? It is to no purpoſe for them to ſay, that they mean that there are three perſons in the godhead; for ſtill the queſtion returns, What do you mean by the word perſon? Do you mean that there are three *names* belonging to the godhead? Or do you uſe the word *perſon*, as it is commonly uſed, to ſignify a diſtinct *being*, or intelligent agent?

thoſe who follow their example, we may call "unitarians," the latter we may be allowed to term "trinitarians." Does it not alſo appear, as if the trinitarians paid religious adoration to a mortal man? For could GOD redeem us by his blood* ? Could the eternal, unchangeable Jehovah, be *born*, be *circumciſed*, be *baptized*, be *tempted*, be in an *agony* and *bloody ſweat*, be *crucified and ſuffer?* Could the immortal ONE *die* and be *buried*† *?* And yet the Being, whom in the litany you addreſs, is a Being of whom this is ſpoken. But ſurely no ſuch being is worſhipped in the holy ſcriptures. The only being there adored, is the King eternal, immortal inviſible. Had our heavenly Father deſigned that we ſhould worſhip a God the *ſon*, and a god the *holy ghoſt*, would he not have informed us of it in the bible? Had he deſigned that

* Neither Acts xx. 28. nor 1 John iii. 16. countenance an idea ſo ſhocking, for there is the greateſt reaſon to believe that Luke wrote it, "Feed the church of the *lord*," i. e. of the lord Jeſus; as it is thus quoted by the moſt antient chriſtian writers. John probably wrote, Herein we perceive love, in that he, &c. (meaning Jeſus.)

† The trinitarians, who addreſs Jeſus Chriſt in the language of the litany,—By the myſtery of thy holy incarnation, &c. muſt addreſs him as *man*, or as *God*. If as *God*, then they aſſert that God was born, bled, died, &c. If as *man*, then they coolly and deliberately pray to a mere mortal.

that we ſhould worſhip a *trinity* of Gods, would the ſcriptures have been ſilent about it? That we muſt worſhip the *Father* is plainly declared. But we have neither precept, nor example, for going farther. On the contrary, Jeſus declares, that we muſt worſhip the *Lord our* GOD, and ſerve *him only**; and whom he meant by the lord, appears plainly from his directing his diſciples to pray, ſaying, "OUR FATHER, who art in heaven." May we not conclude then, that the worſhip of *two other* perſons, is a merely human invention, and ſupported by merely human authority? But it is followed by the church of England. Upon this ground, I exhort you to leave the church of England—no longer to join in her religious ſervices—no longer to countenance her unſcriptural practices.

Worſhip the GOD of Jeſus and his apoſtles---worſhip the GOD of the bible—worſhip *that* GOD according to the dictates of your conſciences—Permit me to urge it upon you by the following conſiderations:

FIRST CONSIDERATION. *We ought to obey* GOD *rather than man.* Suppoſe that almighty GOD appeared to you, and ſaid, "Thou ſhalt have no other GODS but ME, for I the Lord thy GOD am a jealous GOD." Suppoſe that a mortal man appeared next, and directed you to pray not only to GOD the Father, but to a God the ſon, and a God the holy ghoſt; ſhould

* Matt. iv. 10.

hould you heſitate which to obey? But what difference is it, whether the Almighty appear in perſon to you, or whether he inform you of his will by his holy meſſengers and prophets? What difference is it, whether one man or ten thouſand men, ſtand up in oppoſition to him? The path of duty is equally plain in both caſes. You cannot heſitate whom to obey: you cannot heſitate whoſe inſtructions to receive. Shall *they* be your guides, who direct and require you to pray to the Father, the ſon, and the holy ghoſt, or *he* who hath told us, that true worſhippers muſt worſhip the FATHER?

It matters not on what grounds *men* propoſe their rules, or convert their ſentiments into a law; whether they plead the honour of their redeemer; whether they infer their directions from the character he ſuſtains; or whether they plead the practice of chriſtians for ſeveral hundred years. If it appear to us that they preſcribe what GOD hath not required, all that they can ſet before us, is to be conſidered as only *their* opinion, *their* deductions, *their* will; not GOD's word and will. Let them be ever ſo pious and learned, their injunctions are ſtill only *human:* and the queſtion returns, ſhall we hear men rather than GOD?

It matters not by how many, or how devoutly, certain invocations, prayers, and doxologies, are uſed: the great queſtion is, are they countenanced by the new Teſtament? You ſee they are not. How then

can

can they be uſed without violating that reverence which we owe to GOD; without violating the plain authoritative directions which he hath given us? It deſerves, chriſtians, your claim and ſerious conſideration, whether you can do this, and be blameleſs? Will you plead that you are actuated by love and reverence to the Lord Jeſus, and by your ſacred regards to the holy ſpirit? But what reverence and love is that, which induces you to deviate from the plan given by your great lawgiver? What ſacred regards are thoſe which lead you to ſet aſide, or go beyond, the directions of the ſpirit of truth? Reverence and love may induce you to worſhip *Mary* and *all the ſaints*, as well as the *ſon* of Mary. The church of Rome hath as good a right to enjoin the worſhip of the former, as the church of England, or of Scotland, hath to enjoin the worſhip of the latter. Your obedience is as reaſonable in one inſtance as in the other. Reflect, my friends, upon the caſe of the Jews. The firſt commandment was, "thou ſhalt have no other Gods but ME." But they worſhipped idols. GOD, therefore, delivered them into the hands of their enemies. A great part of them were deſtroyed: the remainder of them were carried into captivity. But this brings me to the ſecond conſideration, which I meant to ſuggeſt to you.

SECOND CONSIDERATION. *It is our duty to beware of idolatry.* The apoſtle John concludes his firſt epiſtle with—"little children, keep yourſelves from

from idols." But, is the worſhip (you will ſay) of the church of England idolatrous? Will the members of that church be excluded, as idolaters, from the kingdom of heaven? Far be it from me to ſay, concerning any article of faith, in the language of the abominable athanaſian creed, " that except a man believe it he *cannot be ſaved*, and *without doubt ſhall periſh everlaſtingly*." You believe, I truſt, that all ſincere and virtuous roman catholics will be ſaved. But do you not think that they are chargeable with idolatry? where men are idolaters through ignorance, and can preſerve their minds untainted by the bad influences of the practice, we may cheerfully embrace them as fellow-heirs of a common ſalvation. But ſtill let us not forget that they are idolaters, and that if *we*, who enjoy more light than they, follow their example, we ſhall juſtly become objects of the divine diſpleaſure. If it be idolatry, to worſhip any beſides that Being who ſaid, " thou ſhalt have no other Gods but ME;" if it be idolatry to worſhip GOD under a *bodily form*; how can they be exculpated from the charge of idolatry, who pray not only to GOD the *Father*, but to a God the *ſon*, and a God the *holy ghoſt*, and invoke the Almighty, by his *nativity and circumciſion*, his *agony* and *bloody ſweat*, his *croſs* and *paſſion*, his *death* and *burial*. Whether the worſhipping of three different perſons, as three objects of adoration, and yet conſtituting but one God; whether the worſhipping of a divinity who is himſelf his own *father*

and his own *ſon*, his own *ſender* and his own *meſſenger*; whether the worſhipping of the *immutable* and *eternal* Godhead, as having *changed* the mode of his exiſtence, and compounded himſelf with the frail and mortal nature of man, on purpoſe that he might *die*; whether this be not a ſpecies of *idolatry*, unknown in ancient times, unaccountably monſtrous and irrational, and repugnant to every *natural* feeling of an unprejudiced mind, I leave to your ſerious and candid conſideration. It matters not that the holy Jeſus is an object of this idolatry. Can you imagine it will be acceptable to *him*, "who ſought not his own glory,"—"who did not his own will, but the will of him who ſent him."—and who replied to the perſon who addreſſed him with the appellation of *good maſter*, "why calleſt thou *me* good? there is none good but *one*, that is GOD." Would you honour the ſon as you honour the Father? Pay *that kind* of honour to him which he required:—not religious adoration, but that *attention to his doctrines and commands*, to which he, and every meſſenger from heaven, is juſtly entitled. All due and grateful reſpect be rendered to the ſon of GOD, to the captain of our ſalvation: but I *dare* not give that religious homage and glory to the *ſon*, which I verily think, and am fully perſuaded, ought to be given to the *Father only*.

It may be ſaid, that the doctrine of the trinity is an harmleſs ſpeculative opinion, and that the practice which

which follows it can have no bad moral tendency. But it is hardly poſſible that any falſe notion concerning GOD can be perfectly innocent, and eſpecially a notion ſo very falſe as this, viz. that divine worſhip ſhould be paid to Jeſus Chriſt, as a being, *the ſame in ſubſtance*, and equal in power and glory, *with the Father*. When it is apprehended, that inſtead of *one* there are *three* beings, to whom the perfections of deity are referred, the imaginations of men will always make a partition of divine attributes among them; and in no one of them will there be that union of venerable and amiable attributes, which we aſcribe to *the one only true* God: and as the mind of man cannot contemplate more than one object at the ſame time; it cannot, with theſe notions, be poſſeſſed of that mixture of reverence and love, of which the ſentiments of true devotion conſiſt. From theſe principles it will follow, that while the *Father*, *ſon*, and *holy ghoſt*, are equally regarded as God, one of them will be thought to poſſeſs one ſet of attributes, and another a different ſet: one of them will be imagined to be of one diſpoſition, and another of another; juſt as the heathens conceived of their ſeveral deities.

I appeal (ſays a great writer) to the conviction of the *athanaſians* themſelves, whether, in their ideas, there be not ſomething more *ſtern* and *inflexible* in the character of the Father, than of the ſon: alſo, notwithſtanding they aſcribe divine attributes to the Fa-

ther, whether, leaving the ſon out of the queſtion, ſomething particularly amiable and engaging would not be wanting in what would remain of the divine Being; and likewiſe, whether leaving out the Father and ſon, the *ſpirit* alone (according to their cuſtomary ideas of his nature and attributes, mercy and goodneſs) would be equal to the works of creation, providence, and redemption. If this be a juſt repreſentation, there is nothing that the *athanaſians* really conceive of as *one* being, to whom they aſcribe all the divine perfections of juſtice, goodneſs, and mercy. The trinitarian doctrine muſt ſometimes, therefore, be unfavourable to real goodneſs, by deſtroying the effects of thoſe motives to virtue, which are derived from the imitation of GOD. For certainly it would not be to the advantage of any man's character to reſemble GOD the *Father*, according to the ideas that ſome perſons have of him; ideas which they never could have entertained of him, if, by dividing the godhead, they had not diveſted him of ſome of his eſſential attributes.

Is it not then your duty, brethren, to abſtain from a ſpecies of idolatry, which perverts your notions of the divine character, and has a natural tendency to corrupt your moral feelings? If there be ſin, if there be danger, in idolatry of any kind; can you ſatisfy yourſelves in a conduct, which ſupports idolatry; which expoſes you to the danger, and involves you in the guilt, of it? Is this the line of conduct to be

purſued

purſued by a ſincere diſciple of the lord Jeſus? If you coolly and impartially conſider the matter, you muſt be convinced it is not.—But let us proceed to the

THIRD CONSIDERATION. *It is not conſiſtent with ſincerity*, that an unitarian chriſtian ſhould take a part in any trinitarian worſhip. Did you certainly know that ſome who join in acts of public worſhip, believed in their heart that there is no GOD, or that he is not to be worſhipped, nor will reward thoſe who diligently ſeek him; would you not judge ſuch perſons as acting an inconſiſtent and inſincere part; as contradicting their own convictions, and aſſuming falſe appearances? Could you regard them as *honeſt* men? Be perſuaded then to reflect, how nearly your conduct reſembleth theirs; if you continue to join in the worſhip of Beings, who, you are convinced, have no claim, on the authority of the ſcriptures, to ſuch prayers and praiſes as are offered to them. Can you exculpate yourſelves, in this caſe, from the charge of inſincerity? Your conduct indeed is attended with circumſtances which render your inſincerity much more aggravated than that of the atheiſt. Believing in God, you muſt be convinced of your obligations to obedience, and cannot but know that you are forbidden to worſhip any but the Supreme Being.

If you be *unitarians*, do you in your *private* devotions pray to God the *ſon* and God the *holy ghoſt*?

No: you feel, that, if you did, your hearts would upbraid you with inſincerity. And will you dare in *public* to trifle with the Almighty, and with your own conſciences? If *any* actions ſhould be clear and unequivocal, *thoſe* ſhould be ſo, which have a direct concern with the GOD of truth. The apoſtle, therefore, exhorted the temporizing diſciples of old, to ſhun the feaſts in honour of idols, leſt they ſhould be ſuppoſed to entertain a veneration for the idols. The chriſtians of the following age refuſed to caſt incenſe upon the altars of the heathen gods, fearing that this action would ſpeak a language repugnant to the ſentiments of their minds. They endured every torture, and patiently ſubmitted to a cruel death, rather than by words or deeds contradict their convictions. Their example, my brethren, is well worthy of your imitation. Indeed, unleſs we do follow it, we ſhall have no right, at the concluſion of this mortal life, to comfort ourſelves with the reflection, that "in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our converſation in the world." There is nothing more diametrically oppoſite to the character of a true chriſtian, than the great maxim of the heathen philoſophers in former times, and of unbelievers in theſe, viz. *to think with the wiſe and act with the vulgar.* The true chriſtian is a character that is all of a piece. What he believes, he openly profeſſes and acts upon. He is ſtudious to avoid even the appearance of evil, and

and therefore dreads giving the leaſt countenance to any ſyſtem or mode of worſhip which in his own judgment he condemns. He fears GOD, and fears nothing elſe; and, *provided his own heart does not condemn him, he cares not what men may ſay of him, or do unto him.*

But perhaps it will be pleaded by ſome, that they do not repeat what they diſapprove. Upon the ſame principle you may join in the religious ſervices of any body of men upon earth. You may join in the worſhip of the church of *Rome*, in the worſhip of a mahometan or of a heathen aſſembly, and thus paſs for a good *catholic* in France, a faithful *muſſulman* in Turkey, and an honeſt *pagan* in Africa. And think one moment, whether that principle can be good, righteous, and eligible, which will admit you as well to be members of any ſuperſtitious and idolatrous church in the world, as of the church of England itſelf?

Suppoſe that a ſet of unenlightened heathens, zealous for the religion of their anceſtors, ſhould erect a temple in your neighbourhood, and conſecrate it to the ſervice of the gods of antiquity; ſhould you think yourſelves excuſable in ſhunning chriſtian aſſemblies, and bending your knee before the altar of Jupiter, of Venus, or of Bacchus?—Should you think it ſufficient to juſtify your conduct, that you adopted no expreſſion inconſiſtent with your real ſentiments? Moſt certainly not. You would be ſhocked at the idea of ſuch a conduct. You would think yourſelves under

an indiſpenſible obligation to confine yourſelves to *that* worſhip which is more agreeable to your chriſtian principles, to that temple in which your feelings would not be wounded, nor your devotions diſturbed, by the addreſſes of your fellow-worſhippers to the deities of their imaginations. But, for the very ſame reaſon, it behoves you to forſake the communion of the church of England, and join in the religious ſervices of a ſociety whoſe principles are more agreeable to your own: unleſs you think that the circumſtance of its being eſtabliſhed by the *civil magiſtrate*, creates a diſtinction, unleſs you think that the civil magiſtrate can change the very nature of right and wrong, and make that conſiſtent with integrity, which would otherwiſe be inſincere and hypocritical.

Your attendance at the trinitarian place of worſhip, will lead others to imagine that you are trinitarians. Let me put a parallel caſe. Suppoſe there are two muſic-meetings in the town where you live, in one of which there is never any ſong allowed, but what you are convinced is perfectly conſiſtent with religion and virtue; while in the other there are ſome profane and indecent ſongs mingled with the good? Suppoſe your ſon voluntarily choſe to attend the latter, and there ſhewed no diſlike to the profaneneſs and immodeſty of the ſongs, but ſeemed as much to join with theſe as with ſuch as were innocent; would you not ſeverely reprove and condemn him, and imagine that he had too much love

for

for obſcenity and impiety? And ſuppoſe he ſhould tell you at home, that when he was at the muſic-meeting, and bore a part in the tunes, he either ſtopped when the indecent paſſages occurred, or elſe ſung ſome other words; would you admit this as a ſufficient excuſe? Would you not inſiſt upon it, that it was his duty, there, upon the ſpot, to publiſh his diſlike, or rather to reſolve to go thither no more? And would you not think that his *chooſing* to avoid the innocent concert, and to frequent the vicious one, was a ſign he was grown in love with profaneneſs and immorality? And would you not urge that his proteſting againſt fact would not ſerve his turn? No. more will *your* proteſting againſt fact ſerve yours. Is there not all the *ſame* reaſon to condemn your practice, which is exactly like it? By taking a part in trinitarian worſhip, you virtually profeſs, in the face of all who ſee you do ſo, that you are trinitarians.—Unleſs your contradiction of this profeſſion be as public as the action itſelf, you muſt, with regard to many, be acting the hypocrite. And, indeed, if it were poſſible, for you to caution all who witneſs your devotions, from conſidering you as trinitarians, there would be ſo glaring an inconſiſtency in your conduct, that you muſt expect the cenſure, if not contempt of the honeſt.

If you really look upon ſeveral paſſages in the liturgy to be contrary to truth, and to the holy ſcripture, and to contain in them contradictions and idolatry;

idolatry; is there not as much reaſon, that you ſhould leave the communion of the church, as that your ſon ſhould avoid profane muſic-meetings? Act a conſiſtent part. Leave your hypocriſy. Dare not any longer to trifle with men and with a heart-ſearching GOD. Be not aſhamed of the truth in an unbelieving and ſcoffing age. "Be faithful to death, and you ſhall inherit the crown of life*."—But conſider, farther,

FOURTHLY. *Your obligations to the cauſe of truth and chriſtianity.* Do you not look upon it as deſirable, my unitarian friends, that the truth ſhould be generally known and received? But how is it poſſible that this ſhould ever be the caſe, if it be never *profeſſed?* Do you think there would have been at this day any chriſtians in the world, if all the diſciples of Jeſus, in the earlier ages, had contented themſelves with a ſilent acquieſcence in the truth of the goſpel, whilſt they regularly frequented the temples of idol gods? Do you imagine that there would have been any reformation two hundred years ago, had the firſt proteſtants never thought of withdrawing themſelves from the communion of the church of Rome, nor of forming ſocieties, whoſe religious ſervices ſhould be conducted more agreeably to the ſcripture plan? Can it be expected, then, that the doctrine of the *divine unity* ſhould gain ground, whilſt unitarians remain quietly

* See an Addreſs to conforming arians, printed in 1735; reprinted, at Cambridge, in 1788.

quietly in a trinitarian church? The experiment, however, has been tried. About an hundred years ſince, there was in England a body of very reſpectable unitarians. They were men of the beſt characters; they were zealous for the truth; but they did not ſee that duty called upon them to abſent themſelves from the eſtabliſhed places of worſhip. The conſequence was, that, upon their deaths, the doctrine of the unity of GOD was nearly loſt in this country. Mr. Firmin, a moſt excellent unitarian chriſtian of that period, became ſenſible towards the end of his life that they had acted upon miſtaken and pernicious principles. He began to fear that the true idea of GOD would be loſt among chriſtians. He was painfully apprehenſive, that unleſs unitarians formed themſelves into diſtinct religious ſocieties, the continual uſe of terms which, in their ordinary ſignification, are confeſſed by all to imply three Gods, would *paganize*, at ſome time, the whole chriſtian church. The preſent flouriſhing ſtate of the unitarian cauſe, is principally to be aſcribed to the deciſive and noble conduct of thoſe honeſt men, who have withdrawn themſelves from the eſtabliſhed church, and ſacrificed to truth and conſcience every proſpect of intereſt and emolument. Were all of you, my brethren, to imitate their example, it would be an effectual means of ſerving the cauſe of truth. But nothing ſhort of your ſeparation from every trinitarian ſociety of chriſtians, will be of any laſting avail.

There

There cannot be a plainer rule of life than this, that every man ſhould do what he would wiſh others to do, and what he is convinced would be beſt, if all others would do. No man can tell what influence his own example may have to produce a good effect. Whatever comes of it, he by theſe means diſcharges his conſcience, and (as far as following his duty in this inſtance can do it) *ſaves his own ſoul* *. Perhaps it would be the means of relieving from a heavy burden the mind of many a miniſter of the lord Jeſus, who is convinced that the offices of the church are very diſtant from the principles of the goſpel, but whoſe apprehenſions of the diſtreſſes of poverty are a bar to his following the dictates of truth and conſcience. Such would find congregations ready to receive them as their paſtors. You would become their friends and patrons. What ſatisfaction would it yield you; and how would you rejoice in the hope of ſharing the rewards, as you had eaſed the trials of thoſe righteous men, who nobly ſacrificing every proſpect of future advancement, and dignity, would readily put up with a ſcanty ſubſiſtence, rather than diſobey the dictates of their conſciences! Would it not afford much greater ſatisfaction to your minds, than can ever reſult from your preſent courſe of conduct, which encourages in their hypocriſy thoſe clergymen, who not only ſubſcribe what they do not believe,

* See a Letter to a layman on the ſubject of Mr. Lindſey's propoſal for a reformed church, p. 18.

believe, but utter every day what they muſt conſider as impious falſehoods, in the form of a ſolemn addreſs to almighty GOD. And can it be eaſy to you to be acceſſary to other men's ſins; and, thus, to be, in ſome meaſure, the cauſe why *ſome periſh, for whom Chriſt died!*

By continuing in communion with a trinitarian church, you not only do your part to prevent a reformation, but you eſſentially injure the cauſe of Chriſt, and take the moſt effectual ſtep in your power to confirm and perpetuate the prejudices of unbelievers againſt the religion of Jeſus. A clergyman (who had been a chaplain aboard a ſhip) writing to Mr. Whiſton, ſays, "I was ſorry that the turks, jews, &c. were ſo very much offended with the chriſtian religion, upon theſe two accounts, viz. the one the worſhipping of images, the other the belief and worſhip of the *trinity, which ſeemed to them to be the belief of three Gods.*" La Compte's hiſtory of China ſpeaks of the heathens, as deriding the chriſtian doctrine of a *mortal* God, and upon that account conſidering chriſtianity as *fabulous.* Dr. Cauſabon ſays, that *this doctrine has kept more people from embracing the chriſtian faith than any thing he knows of.* Mahomet, in his Koran, ſays, "It is long ſince the infidels (meaning the chriſtians) have ſaid that there are three Gods; certainly there is but one." Thus does the doctrine of the trinity prove a ſtumbling-block in the way of jews, mahometans, and heathens.

Nor is it to be wondered at, that ſome, even in this country, offended with the harſh ſounds and irreconcilable principles of the eſtabliſhed liturgy, forſake the aſſemblies of public worſhip, whilſt others are prejudiced againſt chriſtianity, and driven into infidelity. Will it not be a ſervice to ſuch, to ſet them an example of diſtinguiſhing between the goſpel and the corruptions of it? Will it not afford them a fair opportunity to judge of its truth, if you exhibit it in its plain and native dreſs? Let them ſee what chriſtianity is in *itſelf*. Your continued conformity miſleads them, and contributes to keep out of ſight the real and genuine goſpel. Every error retained, obſcures the light and glory of the goſpel. Peculiarly pernicious, then, muſt be the influence of an error which beclouds the fundamental doctrine of revelation—the *unity* of GOD, and multiplies the objects of religious adoration.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

THOUGH the juſtneſs of this repreſentation be acknowledged; it may be objected, perhaps, by ſome,

(FIRST OBJECTION.) *That it does not become common lay chriſtians to buſy themſelves about a reformation, and that this matter ought to be left to the biſhops and the reſt of the clergy.*

But let me requeſt ſuch perſons to remember, that the arguments and reaſonings which have been adopted

adopted in this addreſs, apply to all orders of chriſtians. Is not religion the concern of *every* man? Is it not the duty of *every* man to obey GOD? Does not *every* man worſhip GOD for himſelf? Is not integrity and ſincerity required in *every* man? Is not the truth of the ſame importance to *every* man? Is not *every* man under an obligation to lay no ſtumbling-block in the way of the converſion and ſalvation of unbelievers? You may as well ſay, my friends, that the biſhops and clergy are to be juſt, and charitable, and temperate, and pious, for you; and that it is no concern of yours to cultivate theſe virtues. But pray conſider, that if you be not *good chriſtians yourſelves*, you cannot expect to be *ſaved* yourſelves.

Beſides, you have no reaſon to ſuppoſe that the biſhops and clergy in general will ever promote a reformation. The reformation from popery in the ſixteenth century, was brought about in oppoſition to moſt of the biſhops and clergy. The church of England was placed upon its preſent footing in oppoſition to them. The biſhops have always oppoſed any farther reformation to the utmoſt of their influence. Many unſucceſsful attempts have been made to obtain their concurrence in advancing that and ſimilar objects. It cannot be reaſonably looked for in men whoſe rank, and wealth, and power, depend (or are ſuppoſed to depend) upon things continuing in their preſent ſtate. It cannot be expected that

thoſe clergymen who have conſcientiouſly ſubſcribed the articles, and approve the ſervices of the church, ſhould be friends to any material alteration. Even ſome who cannot but *wiſh* the reformation of many things, in ſo old and complex a ſyſtem as that of the church, have diſcernment enough to foreſee, that if a reformation ſhould once begin, it will not ſtop where they would chooſe to have it; and it is but too plain, that they are abſolutely bent upon retaining, at the hazard of perpetuating whatever themſelves think wrong, many things which they are ſenſible cannot eſcape an inquiry, if an inquiry be encouraged. Like ſpiders in the center of an immenſe web, they feel at every extremity of it; fearing that if what ſeem to be only the *outworks* be demoliſhed, the whole fabric will come to the ground*.

With *you*, therefore, my brethren, it lies to *begin* a reformation. You may not live to ſee the *completion* of it: but it will undoubtedly go on and be gaining ground every day. The heads of the church and ſtate *muſt follow*, though they will not *lead*.

But to the conduct which has been pointed out, you may, perhaps, make a

SECOND OBJECTION, viz. *That there are many good things in the church ſervices, and that you ſhow your candour and charity in putting up with what you think amiſs.*

Such

* Letter to a layman, p. 20.

Such a plea would equally excuſe a concurrence in the worſhip of the church of Rome, from the liturgies * of which, theſe excellent things are borrowed. Beſides, no mixture of truth can alter the nature of the errors blended with it; nor any ardour and elevation of ſpirit in ſome parts preſerve us innocent in the uſe of thoſe ſervices, the leading ſentiments of which are *ſinful*. As to the *candour* and *charity* you wiſh to ſhow, permit me to obſerve, that we ought to be greatly upon our guard, that we do not *impoſe* upon ourſelves, by imagining that we poſſeſs and exerciſe a virtue, of which we have only the *appearance*. There is ſcarcely any thing more injurious to our religious character and conduct, than this *ſelf-deception*. I fear it is too often the caſe, that thoſe who perſuade themſelves that they are actuated by *candour* in attending ſtatedly, or occaſionally,

* Even in the darkeſt times of popery, there was a variety of forms in different ſees. That uniformity was not then known, which is now ſo rigidly inſiſted upon. The *act of uniformity of ſervice*, which paſſed in the reign of Edward VI. in the year 1549, begins thus: "Whereas of long time there hath been had, in this realm of England, and in Wales, diverſe forms of common prayer, commonly called the ſervice of the church, that is to ſay, the uſe of Sarum, of York, of Bangor, and of Lincoln: and beſides the ſame, now of late, much more diverſe and ſundry forms and faſhions have been uſed in the cathedral and pariſh churches of England and Wales," &c.

upon the worſhip of the *eſtabliſhed* church, never think of ſhewing their candour by joining in the religious ſervices of ſome *little, mean, and deſpiſed ſect*, and would really be *aſhamed* to be ſeen in their poor and obſcure conventicles. But, in truth, ſuch perſons totally miſtake the nature and proper exerciſe of candour. Candour does not conſiſt in the *ſacrifice* of *principle*, in the *countenancing* and *ſupporting of error*, but in meekly *bearing* with the ſentiments of other people, in *loving* the *men*, though we *reject* their *opinions*, and in entertaining juſt views of their character and future condition. You ſhow no true candour and charity, then, in adopting the idolatrous worſhip of the church of England, or of any other church. When you publicly and uniformly ſhow your deteſtation of that worſhip, you will afford yourſelves an opportunity of teſtifying your charity towards thoſe who conſcientiouſly perform it. But you will, perhaps, ſtate, as a

THIRD OBJECTION, *That you have ſome office, or employment, in the church, in the diſcharge of which you benefit the community.*

But do you really think that the ſervice, which you render to your neighbourhood, is by any means equivalent to the injury you do to your own mind and to the cauſe of pure chriſtianity? Will it by any means make up for your countenancing falſehood and idolatry, for your upholding the moſt glaring corruptions of the goſpel, and bringing a diſcredit upon

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the chriſtian religion? Do you really imagine that GOD ſtands in any need of your inſincerity, wickedneſs and ruin, in order to accompliſh his deſigns? *To do evil that good may come*, is an evil which Paul diſclaims with abhorrence; and James ſays, that *if a man offend*, that is knowingly, wilfully and habitually offend, *in one point, he is guilty of all.*

No longer, then, ſupport the groſſeſt corruptions of chriſtianity, no longer diſguiſe the character and perfections of the almighty, no longer afford an occaſion for the unbelief of the jew, or for the ridicule of the gentile. Profeſs the genuine goſpel of Jeſus; ſeparate yourſelves from an idolatrous church; proteſt againſt her errors; awaken the attention of men; excite them to inquiry; teach them to ſhake off that ſlaviſh reverence for public forms, and an eſtabliſhed religion, which ſcreens jargon, abſurdity, and myſticiſm from a free examination. I addreſs you as chriſtians: I addreſs you as perſons who have learned to look not entirely at the things which *are ſeen and temporal*, but at things which are *unſeen and eternal*; as perſons who think it their duty to give ſome attention to the concerns of religion, as well as to the concerns of buſineſs. If you be diſpoſed to obey GOD rather than *men*; if you have that holy dread of *idolatry*, which animated the primitive believers; if you be friends to that *ſimplicity* and *godly ſincerity*, in which the apoſtle gloried; if you have any *love for the truth*; any *reverence for the goſpel*, any

regard

regard to the *ſalvation of mankind*; I am perſuaded you will feel yourſelves diſpoſed to pay ſome attention to the thoughts which have now been ſubmitted to your conſideration. But there are always difficulties to be encountered in treading the path of duty, and eſpecially *that* part of it, to which we have hitherto been ſtrangers. Happy the man who is not diſcouraged by them from proceeding! Happy the man who has reſolution and ſteadineſs enough to encounter all, and to "preſs forward to the mark of "the prize of his high calling of GOD in Chriſt "Jeſus!" Some diſcouraging thoughts are now, perhaps, preſenting themſelves to your minds, my friends. Be upon your guard, I pray you, that they have not more influence upon you than they deſerve. Conſider that if you be unitarians in principle, every ſuggeſtion which pleads in favour of your conformity to trinitarian worſhip, pleads in *oppoſition to your duty and your eternal intereſt*. One difficulty, and which, indeed, may be conſidered as an unanſwerable objection to the conduct here recommended, is that

(FOURTH OBJECTION.) *There is no place of worſhip near you, in which* GOD *the Father only is worſhipped.*

It is a moſt melancholy thought that this ſhould be the caſe with any of you. But, alas! it muſt be acknowledged, that where there are even *diſſenting* ſocieties, there are frequently no *unitarian* ones, many diſſenters being as firm trinitarians as any church-of-England

England man, and conducting their religious ſervices in a manner equally repugnant to the feelings and principles of a conſcientious worſhipper of the *one, only living, and true* GOD. But when there is a diſſenting ſociety of unitarians, you ought, undoubtedly, to join them in preference to the church of England: for though you like a *liturgy* better than an *extempore prayer*; yet a matter of this kind ought never to be conſidered of ſo much importance as to make you ſacrifice ſincerity, truth, and the goſpel cauſe. But if there be in your neighbourhood *no* unitarian place of worſhip of *any* kind, there is ſo much the greater call for your exertions. A clear, explicit, open, and deciſive conduct is abſolutely neceſſary, if you would ſerve the cauſe of GOD and of truth. If you would be the *only man* in your neighbourhood whoſe eyes almighty GOD has opened to the truth; ſtill be perſuaded to "flee from idolatry." If you make a point of conſcience to devote the Sunday, or any other part of the week, to religious purpoſes, your conduct will ſoon be noticed, ſome perſons will be led to inquire, and it *cannot* be long before you will meet with ſome, ready to join you in ſocial worſhip upon a ſcriptural plan. A cauſe ſo good, *muſt* gain advocates, when it is properly underſtood. Nothing is wanting but *attention and inquiry*, and the truth will flouriſh. Let the ſteadineſs of your conduct, added to the perfection of your character, excite that attention. As ſoon as you meet with any ready to join

you

you in adoring the ONE GOD, you may enjoy all the comforts and advantages of ſocial worſhip. You cannot imagine that it is *eſſential* to the utility and acceptableneſs of ſocial worſhip, that *numbers* ſhould be aſſembled together in a houſe devoted to the purpoſe, and with all the attendants of a miniſter regularly educated, and other officers.

In the firſt ages of chriſtianity we read of *churches* that did not extend beyond the circle of a family, as the church in Nympha's houſe*, and that in the houſe of Philemon, &c. It cannot admit of a doubt whether it be not preferable to worſhip the only true GOD with one's *family only*, agreeably to the ſcriptures, and in the language of ſincerity and truth, than to join the largeſt ſociety with every circumſtance of ſtate, convenience and ſplendor, in a worſhip which the ſcriptures forbid, and our hearts diſapprove. You will find it more eaſy to put ſuch a plan into execution than you might at firſt imagine. Of uſeful ſermons there is a great variety, ſuch as Tillotſon's, Secker's, Balguy's, Jortin's, Lardner's, Bourne's, Holland's, and Prieſtley's.—You will be well able to conduct the devotional ſervices, with the aſſiſtance of Mr. Lindſey's reformed liturgy, of that uſed at Saliſbury†, or of Dr. Prieſtley's forms of prayers, and

* Col. iv. 15.

† There is alſo a valuable one lately publiſhed, at the new unitarian chapel in Mancheſter, as well as a copious collection of pſalms and hymns printed at *Birmingham*.

and other offices, for the uſe of unitarian ſocieties. In theſe publications you will find ſervices for the lord's ſupper and for baptiſm, which it is unreaſonable to ſuppoſe can be conducted properly by none, but a regular ordained miniſter, for nothing of this kind is intimated in the new Teſtament.

By thus maintaining a noble independence and conſiſtency of conduct in all your religious concerns, you will improve and confirm your own character; you will be an honour to the cauſe you eſpouſe; you will render eſſential ſervice to mankind, and be enabled to look forward with pleaſure to the great day of retribution. You and your fellow labourers in the cauſe of GOD, will be like a *city ſet upon a hill:* you will be the means of diſſeminating, far and wide, the principles of true chriſtian worſhip, and of diffuſing a ſpirit of ſerious and rational zeal.

But, perhaps, you will ſtart another difficulty, viz. that

(FIFTH OBJECTION.) *You have reaſon to expect a violent oppoſition to your ſeparating from the church, on the part of your neareſt friends and connections.*

Your caſe is undoubtedly to be pitied. But poſſibly your fears lead you to imagine that they will carry their reſentment much farther, than there is any juſt ground for fearing they will. When they ſee that you act upon *principle*, that the favour and approbation of GOD is the grand motive of your conduct, and that you are *ſteady* in what you eſteem to be the path of duty; their reſentment will probably

bably be ſoftened, and their confidence and affection towards you, will gradually revive. Indeed, the mere circumſtance of your diſſent being an *old* thing, (as it muſt in time become) will naturally wear off that *dread* towards it, which was felt at firſt: and they will at length perceive and acknowledge, that it has not made you ſuch a *ſtrange being* as they imagined it would. At any rate the line of duty is clear. Your hardſhips will be no greater than thoſe which our lord laid it down as abſolutely neceſſary that his firſt followers ſhould endure, than thoſe which were often experienced by the reformers of the ſixteenth century, or than thoſe which every faithful diſciple of Jeſus will be ready to undergo, when called to them in the courſe of duty. "He that loveth father or "mother more than me (ſaith our lord) is not wor-"thy of me. He that loveth ſon or daughter more "than me, is not worthy of me. Whoſoever he be "of you that forſaketh not all which he hath, his "father and mother, and wife and children, and "brethren and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he "cannot be my diſciple." May God give you grace to act up to your chriſtian profeſſion!

But ſome perhaps will ſay,

(SIXTH OBJECTION.) *I cannot bear to be ſo ſingular, as to leave the church in which I have been educated, eſpecially if it be neceſſary to make my houſe a place of ſocial worſhip.*

But let ſuch perſons conſider, that the greater the *effort*, the greater will be the *merit*, and that where

duty

duty is concerned, all other conſiderations, be their weight greater or leſs, ought to be poſtponed to it. We chriſtians ought to be thankful that we have nothing more difficult to encounter. What ſhould we have done in the day of adverſity, if we cannot bear proſperity? And it ought not to be forgotten, that none will be diſtinguiſhed by our great maſter as his worthy diſciples and followers, but thoſe who ſhall be ready to riſk and even to abandon every thing in the world, and even to *take up their croſs* for the ſake of his goſpel. Every ſituation and circumſtance of things, has its peculiar difficulties, which wiſe and conſcientious men will lay their account with meeting, and be prepared to bear. This, in fact, muſt be done by every perſon who does not adopt the principle of univerſal *conformity to the world*, and who will not make his religion ſubſervient to it. But what will ſuch religion do for a man, when the world and all the follies and vanities of it, ſhall be no more*?

It is *your* profeſſed faith as chriſtians, that aſſuredly as the great author of our religion, the ambaſſador of truth and grace, has already appeared in the world, he will be revealed from heaven, to raiſe his ſincere diſciples to glory and immortality. How will all the great and ſplendid things of life diſappear before the brightneſs of his coming! Is there need of more than one moment's calm reflection to convince you, that then the only thing of conſequence will be the approbation

* Preface to Forms of prayer, &c.

bation of his Father and our Father, of his God and our God? And can we really entertain the ſerious and rational hope of it, merely becauſe we have profeſſed his religion, whilſt we have joined with the *many* to countenance, and with the *great* to ſupport the corruptions of it? Will it be then a valid plea, that *faſhion* and *intereſt* ſuffered us to depart from his laws, to act inconſiſtently with our own convictions, and obey *men* rather than GOD? Conceive how your minds would be affected, were the awful appearance of the judge, an event which you had grounds to look for, within a few days; were the heavens to open, and you to ſee him coming in the clouds, in whom you believe as the guide to eternal life—him who declared that the "true worſhippers will worſhip "the FATHER in ſpirit and in truth"—him who was himſelf "the faithful and true witneſs," and died "leaving us an example to follow his ſteps"—him who hath warned us, that "whoſoever loveth father or mother more than him, is not worthy of him"—him who hath laid it down as a certain principle, that his true diſciples are not of the world! It is left to your own minds to imagine, how a conduct formed from a deference to the example and authority of *worldly men*, or from the views of profit and greatneſs, will appear to ſuch a judge, and to *your own hearts*, when ſummoned to his tribunal, and to receive according to your works.

You believe the chriſtian religion to be true. Believing it to be true, can you doubt the propriety of my

my laying theſe conſiderations before you, or reſiſt the force of them? You cannot but believe that the great founder of your faith will verify all his declarations: and then what will be the ſtate of thoſe who have regarded the *world* and what it can offer, more than *his word* and promiſes? Can you look forward to their ſituation without fear, without ſolicitude to eſcape the ſhame and diſgrace of it? Theſe expectations are ſufficient to expoſe the weakneſs and folly of being captivated by the pomps and emoluments, enſlaved by the authority, or enſnared by the faſhion, of any religious eſtabliſhment whatſoever. Theſe are things which will all vaniſh away as airy phantoms. But truth, fidelity to GOD, and integrity of character, are things of laſting excellence and worth, of eſſential importance on that day which will try all things: everlaſting honours await them; they will draw after them, in the final iſſue, ſtability, glory, and life for evermore.

It is but a ſhort time before we ſhall find the truth of theſe things: they ſhould therefore affect our minds, and influence our conduct, as if they were to be immediately revealed. "It is but a ſhort time that we "have, any of us, to abide here; and therefore we "ſhould loſe no opportunity of bearing our teſti-"mony to the truth of God."

Whatever be your circumſtances, dread joining, with your enlightened and informed minds, in *unſcriptural*, *inſincere*, and *idolatrous* worſhip, remembering

the words of the lord Jeſus, that the FATHER ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him, as "worſhip him in *ſpirit* "*and in truth*:" and "thou ſhalt love the LORD "THY GOD, and him ONLY ſhalt thou ſerve."

Dread alſo that awful voice from heaven, reſpecting all antichriſtian corruptions of the goſpel in figurative Babylon: "Come out of her, my people, that "ye be not partakers of her ſins, that ye receive not "of her plagues."

That you may be daily growing in grace; that you may act with the firmneſs of men, with the ſeriouſneſs and conſiſteney of chriſtians, is the ſincere prayer of

Your affectionate friend,

and brother in the lord Jeſus.

Dec. 12, 1789.

TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATED.

IT is the opinion of many learned men, that in the following paſſages, among others, the tranſlators of our preſent Engliſh bible have made conſiderable miſtakes.

Iſaiah ix. 6. is rendered by ancient and many modern interpreters, "His name ſhall be called wonderful, counſellor, the ſtrong, the mighty, the father of the age." An examination of Mr. Robinſon's plea, p. 39. See alſo Mr. Coulthurſt's blunders expoſed, by W. Friend, M.A. No. 1.

Acts vii. 59. The word *God* is not in the original.

Acts xx. 28. In the beſt and moſt ancient manuſcript copies of the new Teſtament, it is "feed the church of the lord, which he hath purchaſed with his blood," not God. See Frend, No. 5.

Rom. ix. 5. might be tranſlated "whoſe (i. e. the Iſraelites) are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came: God who is over all be bleſſed for ever, Amen." See Frend, No. 2, or Clarke's Scripture doctrine.

1 Cor. i. 2. ſhould be tranſlated (ſay ſome learned critics) "with all that, in every place, are called by the name of Jeſus Chriſt our lord." Two diſſertations, by T. Lindſey, M.A. p. 95, &c.

Phil.

Phil. ii. 6. would have been more juſtly tranſlated, "who, being in the form of God, thought not the being like to God a thing to be gredily ſeized by him; but emptied himſelf, taking the form of a ſervant, being in the likeneſs of men, and being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf," &c.—Examination of Robertſon, p. 76. See Le Clerc's Supplement to Hammond.

Heb. i. 8. ſhould rather be rendered, "but concerning the ſon, he ſaith, God is thy throne for ever and ever," that is, God is the ſupport of thy throne, &c. See Pierce on the Hebrews.

1 Tim. iii. 16. It is doubtful whether we ſhould read "*God* was manifeſt," or, "*which* was manifeſt." In our firſt Engliſh verſion, it is thus rendered, and openli it is a greet ſacrament of pitee, that thing that was, ſchewide in fleiſche, it is juſtified in ſpirit, it apperide to aungels, it is prechide to hethene men, it is beleeved in the world, it is taken up in glorie." Frend, No. 5.

1 John iii. 16. Moſt copies, omitting the word *God*, read this verſe thus, "Herein perceive we love, in that he laid down his life for us." Chriſtie's Diſcourſes, p. 253. and Benſon on the place.

1 John v. 7, 8. ſhould read thus, "For there are three that bear record, the ſpirit, the water, and the blood, and theſe three agree in one." The words [*in heaven, the Father, the word, and the holy ghoſt, and theſe three are one, and there are three that bear*

witneſs

witneſs in earth] have never been proved to be in ANY greek manuſcript, before the invention of printing; nor were ever cited by any of the numerous writers in the whole arian controverſy, concerning the trinity, in the fourth century. In the Engliſh bibles in the reign of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. they were printed in a *different character*, to ſignify their being wanting in the original. See Emlyn's Inquiry into the authority of 1 John v. 7. Remarks on Mr. Travis, in Commentaries and eſſays, vol. i. and Mr. Capel Lofft's Anſwer to Dr. Knowles.

Rev. i. 11. The words [*I am Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt*] were probably not written by the author of the book, as they are ſaid to be wanting in all the beſt manuſcript copies. Examination of Robinſon, p. 27.

Thoſe who wiſh to ſee what is ſaid in vindication of theſe deviations from our common Engliſh tranſlation of the ſcriptures, may conſult the books above referred to. They will find more upon the ſame ſubject in the "Catechriſt; or an inquiry into the doctrine of the ſcriptures concerning the one true God;" price 2s. or in the "Sequel to an apology on reſigning the vicarage of Catterick:" both by the Rev. Mr. Lindſey. Many valuable criticiſms will likewiſe be found in "A defence of the unity of God," by Mr. Clarke, an attorney at Uxbridge.—The unitarian doctrine is ſupported in a maſterly manner, in "Diſcourſes on the divine unity," by W. Chriſtie, jun.

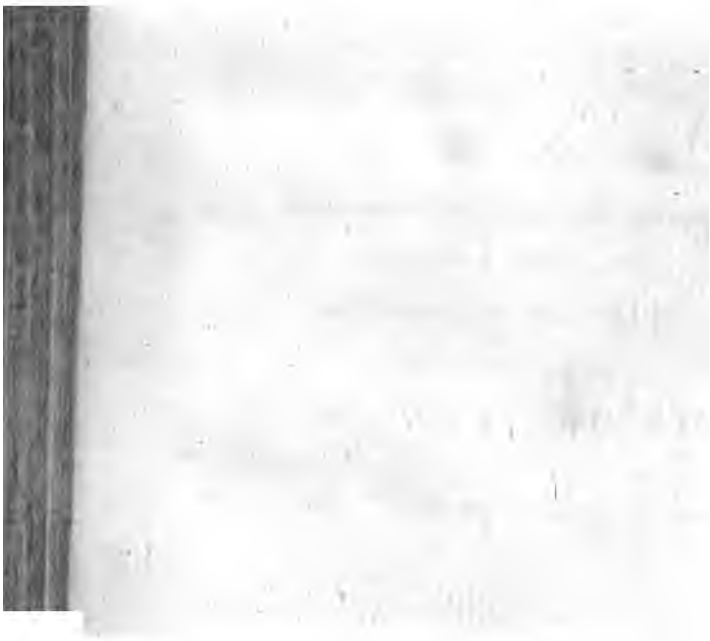
jun. merchant, of Montroſe, a gentleman who has purſued the courſe of conduct recommended in the above addreſs, conducting the religious ſervices of a newly raiſed ſociety, whoſe profeſſed object is to worſhip the only one true God.

Should it be ſaid, that as it is impoſſible for unlearned chriſtians to judge of the authenticity of a paſſage, or of the proper tranſlation of it, they ought to truſt to our Engliſh bible; I would aſk why they muſt truſt to our common verſion rather than to any other? Were the authors of it any thing more than fallible men? Did they excel all other learned perſons in knowledge; or were they more free from prejudice? If not; why may they not confide in other men of learning and integrity as well as in them? That the common tranſlation is very imperfect, and that a more correct one is highly deſirable, has been repeatedly acknowledged by the moſt competent judges both in and out of the church.

But though it is out of the power of unlearned chriſtians to decide concerning the propriety of any tranſlation of a text, from an acquaintance with the original languages; yet as they are able to perceive what the *general ſtrain* of ſcripture is upon any particular point, they muſt conclude that the probability is that thoſe tranſlators are right, who make the ſcripture conſiſtent with itſelf. If an unlearned perſon find, for inſtance, that the ſcriptures uniformly teach us, that there is but one God—that they never cau-

tion

us againſt ſo underſtanding this, as to exclude a
y of perſons—that Jeſus is uſually ſpoken of, as
on of man—that he uniformly prayed to the
er, as the Being upon whom he entirely de-
ed—is it not natural and reaſonable for them to
t thoſe tranſlations of doubtful texts which do
nake ſuch texts contradict a variety of plain and
uivocal paſſages? If they admit that the ſcrip-
are conſiſtent with themſelves, they muſt either
iis, or elſe interpret thoſe few texts which ſeem
repugnant to the general tenor of ſcripture in a
rent ſenſe from what the words ſeem at firſt ſight
onvey. And indeed this is ſometimes neceſſary
n no diſputed doctrine is concerned.



AN ADDRESS

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

AND TO

PROTESTANT TRINITARIANS IN GENERAL,

EXHORTING THEM TO TURN FROM

THE FALSE WORSHIP OF

THREE PERSONS,

TO THE WORSHIP OF

THE ONE TRUE GOD.

'Ye worſhip ye know not what." John iv. 22.

[Re-printed from the fecond edition, 1788.]

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

AND TO

PROTESTANT TRINITARIANS IN GENERAL.

BRETHREN,

PERMIT me to addreſs you on a ſubject of the greateſt importance to a ſincere believer in Chriſt. I obſerve that many of you, every ſeventh day, frequent ſome place ſet apart for religious worſhip. You there profeſs to offer up prayers to the Being who created the world. Whatever may be the laws or cuſtoms of your different places of worſhip, you preſume that they are founded on the holy ſcriptures. Any thing contrary to thoſe ſcriptures, ought not, you think, to be admitted into your worſhip. Surely then it behoves you, at all times, to examine your opinions, to ſee whether you are really and truly worſhipping the true God, the God and Father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt, or a phantom of your own imaginations.

Are you then worſhippers of God or not? It is a ſerious queſtion. Let me perſuade you to give it a moment's conſideration. The words which Chriſt uſed, in anſwer to a jewiſh inquirer after the firſt commandment of the law, may aſſiſt you in your thoughts. "Hear, O Iſraël; the Lord our God is "one Lord; and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God "with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with "all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength: this is the "firſt commandment*." I bring you to this teſt; do you really worſhip that God, of whom Chriſt ſpeaks, or do you not? If you do not, Chriſt himſelf bears witneſs againſt you, that you are not his diſciples. To know whether you do, or do not, deſpiſe your ſaviour, you muſt conſider who God is, of whom Chriſt ſpeaks.

Before I examine this point, let me obſerve to you what I have ſeen, or heard, in your places of worſhip. In the eſtabliſhed churches, a form of prayer is uſed, in which are the following words; —O God the ſon, redeemer of the world—O God the holy ghoſt—O holy, bleſſed, and glorious trinity, three perſons and one God, have mercy upon us miſerable ſinners—O lord Jeſus Chriſt, have mercy upon us; and, in many ſimilar paſſages, prayers are addreſſed to Jeſus Chriſt, to the holy ghoſt, and to the trinity. In moſt alſo of the places of worſhip belonging to the diſſenters, prayers are offered up to Jeſus Chriſt, to the holy ghoſt, and to the trinity.

Now,

* Mark xii. 29.

Now, brethren, if Jeſus Chriſt be not God, if the holy ghoſt be not God, if the trinity be not God, you are guilty of a breach of Chriſt's commandments in praying to them; and if you pray to all theſe, you err grievouſly, for Jeſus Chriſt tells us, that "the Lord our God is one Lord;" to which great truth Moſes, the prophets, and the apoſtles, bear witneſs. You worſhip, alas! other gods than the true God, forgetting what is ſaid in the ſcriptures, "Thou ſhalt not bow down to them, nor "worſhip them."

Of whom then did Chriſt ſpeak? the words are taken from Deut. 6th chap. 4th ver. and, literally tranſlated, are, "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." Jehovah is the name by which God made himſelf known to Moſes; Jehovah created the heavens and the earth; Jehovah called Abraham—ſpake to Moſes ---revealed himſelf to the prophets---was worſhipped by the Jewiſh nation. Throughout the whole of the old Teſtament, Jehovah declares himſelf to be one, and that there is no other God beſide him: the children of Iſrael, while they obeyed him, worſhipped him as the one and only true God; and when they mixed with the worſhip of Jehovah that of idols, they were brought to their ſenſes by ſevere puniſhments. When Chriſt preached to the Jews, Jehovah was the object of their worſhip; of him alſo Chriſt bears witneſs, namely, that Jehovah is the only true God, that there is no one good but

him*, that he is his God and Father†, that Jehovah his Father is greater than he‡.

Theſe few paſſages of ſcripture are, I ſhould think, ſufficient to convince an unprejudiced mind, that they, who offer up prayers to Jeſus Chriſt, to the holy ghoſt, or to the trinity, are highly criminal: but ſince you have formed for yourſelves, without any grounds from ſcripture, ſuch fanciful gods, let us conſider each of them ſeparately.

Firſt. Of *Jeſus Chriſt.* Jeſus Chriſt, ſays an apoſtle to the Jews, "was a man approved of God "among you by miracles, and wonders, and ſigns, "which God did by him, in the midſt of you, as ye "yourſelves alſo know: him, being delivered by the "determined counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye "have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified "and ſlain: whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed "the pains of death‖." Again, "this Jeſus hath "God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes§:--- "and therefore let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſ- "ſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus, "whom ye have crucified, both lord and Chriſt¶." I have ſelected theſe paſſages out of many others, becauſe they give a plain account of our ſaviour. There is a clear diſtinction between God and Chriſt, Chriſt performed wonders, but it was by the power of God

* Matt. xix. 17. † Matt. xi. 25. John xx. 17.
‡ John xiv. 21. ‖ Acts ii. 22.—24.
§ Acts ii. 32. ¶ Acts ii. 36.

God---by God's permiſſion, he was delivered into the hands of the Jews and ſlain---it was God that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead---it was God that made him lord and Chriſt.

How then ſay ye, in expreſs contradiction, to ſcripture, and to common ſenſe, that Jeſus Chriſt is God; making no difference between the great Being who ſent---and the man who was ſent---between him who knoweth all things, and the man who declared, that he did not know all things*---between him, who is the God and Father of Jeſus Chriſt, and that ſame Jeſus, who declared that his Father was greater than he †!

Conſult common ſenſe. Could God lie in the womb of a woman? Could God expire on the croſs? Could God be buried in the grave? Shocking ſuppoſitions! Brethren, examine for yourſelves. Let no man deceive you, by a ſpecious humility, to give worſhip to any, but the one true God, for "thou ſhalt "worſhip him alone ‡."

Secondly. Of the *holy ghoſt*. Our forefathers ſuppoſed, and, at the preſent day, ignorant people in many countries ſuppoſe, that a man conſiſts of two different ſubſtances; one, which we can ſee and feel; the other, a ſubſtance not to be felt. When a man died, they ſuppoſed that theſe two ſubſtances were ſeparated one from the other. The body was conveyed to the ground; and the ghoſt, for ſo they called the other

* Matt. xxiv. 36. † John xiv. 28. ‡ Matt. iv. 10.

other ſubſtance, hovered about the place. Hence a number of idle tales are told about ghoſts in church-yards; and it was ſaid of a man dying, that he gave up the ghoſt. The papiſts have not failed to make uſe of this fooliſh tale to very bad purpoſes, for they ſay, that the ghoſt is tormented for many years, in a place called by them "purgatory." The greek word in the ſcriptures, which means "ſpirit," or "wind," or "breath," is frequently tranſlated by this word "ghoſt." But wherever it is ſo tranſlated, it is applied to God, in the ſame manner, as the ſpirit of a man is to a man. When you ſay, ſuch a man's ſpirit is gentle or untameable, you do not mean, that the man and his ſpirit are different perſons. Neither ought you, when ſpeaking of God, to ſay, that God and his ſpirit are different perſons. Your addreſſes to the holy ghoſt have no foundation in ſcripture, and they are ſtrictly prohibited by the firſt commandment, "thou ſhalt have none other gods but me."

Thirdly. Of the *trinity*. Trinity is a latin word, not to be found in the ſcriptures. The notion, annexed to it in your creed, of three perſons, each of whom is God, making but one God, is rank nonſenſe. And will you, my brethren, enter into the preſence of God, pretend to worſhip him, and yet give him a name, the invention of idle and wicked diſputers. Reflect—there is but one God, and his name is one, and his glory will he not give to another.

Perhaps you will reply to me, that I have ſelected thoſe paſſages only, which favour my opinion, and

have neglected others, which prove Jeſus Chriſt to be God. It is ſufficient for me to obſerve, that the ſcripture cannot contradict itſelf. The paſſages, by which you have been deluded (and I alſo once was deceived, through the prejudices of birth, of education, and of habit) to believe Chriſt to be God, will be found, on examination, to convey no ſuch meaning. Search the ſcriptures. Point out one ſingle paſſage, in which Jeſus Chriſt declared himſelf to be God. Point out one, in which the apoſtles declared him to be God. In a matter of ſuch importance, it is not proper for you, to infer from this or that paſſage, ill explained, that he is God: but as he expreſsly declares himſelf to be inferior to God, believe his words; and, as he commands, worſhip the Father, in ſpirit and in truth.

Perhaps you will ſay, that many pious and learned men have died in your faith. Such men are alſo to be found among catholics, among heathens. Yet you will not ſay, that the romiſh religion is true, or that idols are to be worſhipped.

Perhaps you think it ſufficient to follow, without inquiry, the religion of your fathers. Had your fathers in ſucceſſion done the ſame, what would now be the religion of this country? Three centuries ago, they were immerſed in ignorance and popery; ſome centuries farther back, they were groſs idolaters. On this principle, Jeſus Chriſt and his apoſtles would have had no hearers. Be not deceived, brethren; religion

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is a perſonal concern—the bible is open before you—from thence you are to form your opinions, not from the notions of your fathers, or the cuſtoms of the times.

Perhaps you will ſay, you are ignorant, and theſe things are myſteries. Brethren, to whom did Chriſt preach? Was it not to the poor? Was it not to the unlearned? Were not his diſciples from the loweſt of the people? Did the great men, did any of the rulers, or the phariſees, believe on him*? The preſent times are like thoſe in which Chriſt preached. The rich and learned are not more likely to become his diſciples now, than formerly. As to the myſteries you talk of, remember that myſtery means ſomething hidden; revelation means the diſcovery of that, which was hidden, and unknown†. There are no myſteries in the religion of Jeſus Chriſt: his goſpel is plain, ſimple, and clear. Even the "myſtery of iniquity," which began to work in the apoſtle's time, and now works, and keeps in bondage the nations of Europe, is ſufficiently known, to every inquiring mind.

You will ſay, perhaps, that by adopting my notions of the true God, you will loſe the benefit of ſocial worſhip. The ſeven thouſand men, who refuſed to bend their knees to Baal, did not, you may be ſure, worſhip in the temples of Baal. Social worſhip is a very deſirable thing: but for the ſake of ſocial prayer, I cannot worſhip an idol. Brethren, I call

* John vii. 48. † Mark iv. 22. Col. i. 26.

call you from falſe objects of worſhip, to the worſhip of the living God. If any one, who reads this addreſs, believes with me, that there is one God only, the God and Father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt, I call on him to forſake the temples, where they have ſet up other objects of worſhip. To the reſt, I ſay, with the apoſtle, examine yourſelves, prove your ownſelves, whether you be in the faith? and if your inquiry leads you to this great truth, that the God and Father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt is the only true God, I ſay to you, with the ſcriptures,

WORSHIP HIM ALONE.

W. FREND.

Jeſus College, Cambridge,
Sept. 10, 1788.

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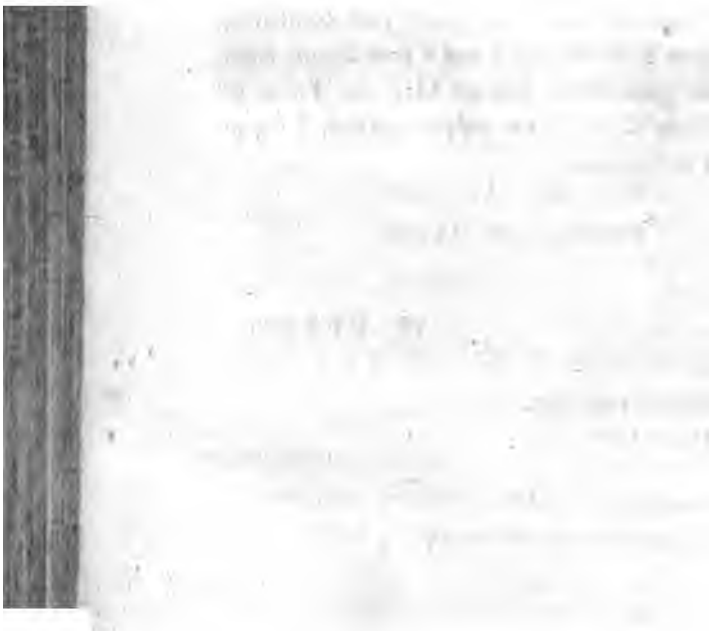

A SECOND ADDRESS

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

AND TO

PROTESTANT TRINITARIANS IN GENERAL,

"We worſhip the Father, in ſpirit and in truth: for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him."

John iv. 23.

[Re-printed from the ſecond edition, 1789.]

A SECOND ADDRESS

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

AND TO

PROTESTANT TRINITARIANS IN GENERAL.

BRETHREN,

I TOOK the liberty of exhorting you, in a former addreſs, to turn from the fanciful gods, which, through falſe notions of ſcripture, you worſhip in the place of the one true God, the God and Father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt. I ſhall now ſhew you more fully from ſcripture, that the God and Father of Jeſus Chriſt is the only true object of worſhip; proving it to you from the expreſs commands of our ſaviour, his own practice, and that of his apoſtles.

I need not premiſe to you, brethren, that the command and practice of our lord and ſaviour ought to be the guide of your actions. You profeſs to believe in Chriſt; you are therefore bound to obey him. Let us then firſt examine what he ſays reſpecting the object of our worſhip.

Our ſaviour, in his excellent ſermon on the mount, and again, on the requeſt of his diſciples to be inſtructed how to pray, gives us a plain rule on this ſubject: "After this manner, therefore, pray ye, Our "Father, who art in heaven*." No precept can be clearer; and it is repeated frequently, with promiſes, that the Father would hear their prayers. "But "thou when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and "when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy Father, "who is in ſecret; and thy Father who ſeeth in "ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly†. Verily, verily, I "ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall aſk of the Father "in my name, he will give it you‡. And when ye "ſtand praying, forgive, if ye have ought againſt "any, that your Father alſo, who is in heaven, may "forgive you your treſpaſſes §. If ye then, being evil, "know how to give good gifts unto your children; "how much more ſhall your Father, who is in hea-"ven, give good things to them that aſk him‖. "Again, I ſay unto you, that if two of you ſhall "agree on earth, as touching any thing that they "ſhall aſk, it ſhall be done for them of my Father, "who is in heaven¶".

Our ſaviour, indeed, had no idea of any other object of worſhip beſides the true God, and quotes a paſſage

* Matth. vi. 9. Luke xi. 2. † Matth. vi. 6.
‡ John xvi. 23. John xv. 16. § Mark xi. 25.
‖ Matth. vii. 11. Luke xi. 13. ¶ Matt. xviii. 19.

paſſage from the writings of Moſes, who ereſsly commands the jews not to bow down to any other. Our ſaviour ſays, " Get thee hence, Satan, for it " is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, " and him only ſhalt thou ſerve *." To the ſamaritan woman he ſaith, " The hour cometh, and " now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip " the Father, in ſpirit and in truth, for the Father " ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him †."

If we attend to the practice of Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhall find it agreeing with his precepts, and that he addreſſed himſelf always to the ſame Being, " his Father " and our Father, his God and our God ‡."

" I thank thee, O Father, lord of heaven and earth, " becauſe thou haſt hidden theſe things from the wiſe " and prudent, and revealed them unto babes; even " ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight ‖. " Father, I thank thee, that thou haſt heard me §. " And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that he went out " into a mountain to pray, and continued all night " in prayer to God ¶. Theſe words ſpake Jeſus, and " lifted up his eyes to heaven, and ſaid, Father, the " hour is come, glorify thy ſon, that thy ſon alſo may " glorify thee **." Read attentively the whole of

 " this

* Matth. iv. 10. Luke iv. 8.
† John iv. 23. ‡ John xx. 17.
‖ Matth. xi. 25. Luke x. 21.
§ John xi. 41. compare John xii. 27, 28.
¶ Luke vi. 12. ** John xvii. 1.

" this prayer, it is a model for your own prayers; " our ſaviour begins with an addreſs to the Father, and repeats the ſame frequently, ſaying, O Father—Holy Father—O righteous Father. What abſurdities do not the trinitarians make of this excellent prayer, when they talk of their God the ſon—their God the holy ghoſt—their God, the holy, bleſſed, and glorious trinity.

Our ſaviour continued to his death in this true and proper mode of worſhip, the only one acceptable to the ſupreme being. " O my Father, if it be poſſible, " let this cup paſs from me; nevertheleſs, not as " I will, but as thou wilt *. Father, forgive them: " for they know not what they do †. My God, my " God, why haſt thou forſaken me ‡. Father, into " thy hands I commend my ſpirit ‖."

From the precept of our ſaviour illuſtrated by his own practice, we conclude that the God and Father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt is the only object of worſhip; and in this opinion we are ſtrengthened by the precepts and general practice of the apoſtles. " They continued daily with one accord, in the " temple, praiſing God §. When they heard, they " lifted up their voice to God and ſaid, Lord, thou " art

* Matth. xxvi. 39, 42. Mark xiv. 36. Luke xxii. 42.

† Luke xxiii. 34. ‡ Matt. xxvii. 46. Mark xv. 34.

‖ Luke xxiii. 46.

§ Acts ii. 46, 47. compare iii. 8, 9. x. 2. 31, 33. xvi. 14.

" art God, who haſt made heaven and earth, the " ſea, and all that in them is—for, of a truth, againſt " thy holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed, both " Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles and " the people of Iſrael, were gathered together—and " now, Lord, behold their threatnings, and grant —that ſigns and wonders may be done in the name " of thy holy child Jeſus*. But prayer was made, " without ceaſing of the church, unto God for " him†. Sirs, why do ye theſe things. we alſo are " men of like paſſions with you, and preach unto " you that ye ſhould turn from theſe vanities unto " the living God, who made heaven and earth, and " the ſea and all things that are therein‡? He took " bread, and gave thanks to God, in the preſence " of them all§."

You may object, perhaps, that there is an inſtance to the contrary in the deacon Stephen, who, on the point of death, called out, " Lord Jeſus, receive my " ſpirit‖." But you are to recollect the particular circumſtances in which he then was, that he ſaw Jeſus Chriſt himſelf in glory, and ſeeing him, made, with great propriety, this addreſs. If any of you, my brethren,

* Acts iv. 24, 27, 29, 30.

† Acts xii. 5. xi. 18. xvi. 25.

‡ Acts xiv. 25. xxvi. 20. compare attentively the three ſpeeches of St. Paul, xvii. 23.

§ Acts xxvii. 35. xxviii. 15.

‖ Acts vii. 59. compare Matth. viii. 25, xiv. 30.

brethren, ſhould ſee our ſaviour in the ſame circumſtances, ſuch an addreſs would be very proper.

The precepts of the apoſtles, in their letters, point out only one object of worſhip. " Now I " beſeech you, brethren, for the lord Jeſus Chriſt's " ſake, and for the love of the ſpirit, that ye ſtrive, " together with me, in your prayers to God for me*. " Be careful for nothing, but, in every thing, by " prayer and ſupplications, let your requeſts be made " known unto God†. If any of you lack wiſdom, " let him aſk of God, who giveth to all men libe- " rally‡. Giving thanks always unto God, even the " Father, in the name of our lord Jeſus Chriſt§. " By him, therefore, let us offer the ſacrifice of " praiſe to God continually, that is, the fruit of our " lips, giving thanks to his name‖. Now the God " of patience and conſolation grant you to be like- " minded one towards another, according to Jeſus " Chriſt, that ye may, with one mind, glorify God, " even the Father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt¶."

To theſe precepts, their practice alſo was conformable. " Wherefore, I alſo ceaſe not to give " thanks for you, making mention of you in my " prayers, that the God of our lord Jeſus Chriſt, " the Father of glory, may give unto you the ſpirit " of

* Rom. xv. 30. xii. 1. † Phil. iv. 6. Col. iii. 17.
‡ Jam. i. 5. 17. § Eph. v. 20. 1 Cor. x. 31.
‖ Heb. xiii. 25. ¶ Rom, xv. 5. 6.

" of wiſdom*. For this cauſe I bow my knees unto " the Father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt†. Brethren, " my heart's deſire and prayer to God for Iſrael is, " that they might be ſaved‡."

Their doxologies, as they are called, or forms of giving praiſe and glory to God, point out equally the ſame object of worſhip, the God of our lord Jeſus Chriſt. " Now unto him that is of power to eſta- " bliſh you according to my goſpel, and preaching " of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the revelation of the " myſtery, which was kept ſecret ſince the world " began:—To God only wiſe, be glory through " Jeſus Chriſt, for ever, Amen§. Bleſſed be God, " even the Father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt, the " Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort‖. " Now unto the king eternal, immortal, inviſible, " the only wiſe God, be honour and glory, for ever " and ever, Amen¶. But the God of all grace, who " hath called us unto his eternal glory by Chriſt Je- " ſus, after that ye have ſuffered awhile, make you " perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you; to him be " glory and dominion for ever and ever*. Now the " God

* Eph. i. 15, 16, 17. Phil. i. 3. iii. 3. 2 Theſſ. i. 3, 11, 12.

† Eph. iii. 14. Col. i. 3. iv. 3. 1 Theſſ. i. 2, 9.

‡ Rom. x. 1. i. 8, 9. 2 Cor. xiii. 7. 1 Cor. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 3.

§ Rom. xvi. 25, 27. Eph. iii. 20.

‖ 2 Cor. i. 3. ii. 14. Eph. i. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3.

¶ *1 Tim. i. 17.* vi. 16. Phil. iv. 20.

" God of peace, that brought again from the dead " our lord Jeſus Chriſt, that great ſhepherd of the " ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting cove- " nant, make you perfect unto every good work, to " do his will, working in you that which is pleaſing " in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt; to whom be " glory for ever†."

Such, my brethren, are the ſcripture forms—and now let me aſk you, where are yours to be found? Not in ſcripture, I aſſure you, but in maſs-books, in prayer-books eſtabliſhed by authority, in decrees of popes and councils, and in acts of parliament. Are maſs-books, decrees of popes and councils, or acts of parliament, the laws of chriſtians? I deteſt and abjure them all; for neither the pope nor council, nor king, nor biſhop, nor ſynod, nor parliament, have power to impoſe any form whatever, much leſs their impious forms on chriſtians. I myſelf have indeed obeyed theſe things. I have been a ſervant of antichriſt: but I thank God, even the God and Father of our lord Jeſus Chriſt, that he has enabled me to tear from my forehead the accurſed mark. In matters of religion, I declare myſelf the ſubject of Jeſus Chriſt alone; in civil matters I am the ſubject of the civil magiſtrate, whom, according to the ſcriptures, I willingly obey.

Is

* 1 Pet. v. 10, 11. compare 2 Cor. ix. 10. &c. Rom. xi. 36.

† Heb. xiii. 20, 21. Rom. xv. 13. 2 Tim. iv. 18. 1 Pet. iv. 11.

Is it not aſtoniſhing, brethren, that, notwithſtanding the variety of excellent forms in the new Teſtament, many of your clergy and miniſters ſhould adopt a form equally repugnant to ſcripture and to common ſenſe; it is uſual for them to add at the cloſe of their ſermons, "now to God the Father, God the ſon, and God the holy ghoſt, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all honour and glory, now and for ever." Thus they ſcruple not to offend the majeſty of heaven, and inſtead of obeying the ſcriptures, they follow the vain traditions of men.

Brethren, I ſpeak plainly to you, becauſe I lament the ſtate into which you are fallen. I would exhort you to turn from your wicked errors, and to read with attention the words of Chriſt and his apoſtles. There are paſſages, it is certain, in your Teſtament ill-tranſlated, but an honeſt mind cannot fail of coming to the truth, if he compare ſcripture with ſcripture; but if you are reſolved to be led away by the difficulties, which, from an obſcure or ill-tranſlated text, a prieſt may throw in your way, be aſſured that you are far gone from the ſimplicity of the goſpel, and make the ſcripture a ſource of infinite confuſion.

Having ſhewn to you, brethren, that Chriſt and his apoſtles worſhipped one God, the father of us all, I ſhall remove a difficulty, which evil men frequently throw in your way, ſlandering us, as if we degraded our ſaviour. Becauſe we worſhip only one God, they ſay, that we diſhonour Chriſt. We give Chriſt

all due honour, but we cannot, without blaſphemy, make him equal to our maker. The ſcriptures are our guide in this reſpect alſo. They teach us that, "Jeſus Chriſt was a man like ourſelves, ſin only excepted*, that he is the beloved ſon of God†—the "holy one, the juſt, the prince of life, the lord of "all‡—that he is the lamb of God, that taketh away "the ſins of the world§—that in him, and no other, is "ſalvation; for there is no other name under heaven "given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved‖—that "God hath exalted him, and given him a name, "which is above every name, that at the name of "Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, and that every tongue "ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus is lord, to the glory of "God the Father¶—that he is made of God, unto "us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, "and redemption**—that he is ordained of God to "be the judge of quick and dead††."—In ſhort, we ſay with St. Paul, "that, when God raiſed him from "the dead, he ſet him at his own right hand in the "heavenly places, far above all principality and "power, and might, and dominion, and every name "that is named, not only in this world, but the world "to come, and put all things under his feet, and gave "him to be the head over all things to the church, "which

* Heb. iv. 15. † Matth. iii. 17.
‡ Acts iii. 14, 15. ii. 36. § John i. 29.
‖ Acts iv. 12. ¶ Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.
** 1 Cor. i. 30. †† Acts x. 42.

" which is his body, even the fullneſs of him that " filleth all in all*."

Thus we give Chriſt all glory, honour and power, that the ſcriptures direct to be given, ſtill believing that, " there is one God and Father of all, who is " above all, and through all, and in you all †—that " there is one God, and one mediator between God " and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus‡."

We believe farther, " that Chriſt ſhall return to " this earth, ſhall have dominion over all, putting all " enemies under his feet: after which, cometh the " end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom " to God, even the Father—then ſhall the ſon alſo " himſelf be ſubject unto him, that put all things un- " der him, that God may be all in all§."

Of true chriſtians we ſay, " that they are the " children of God‖; heirs of God, and joint heirs " with Chriſt¶. We are no more ſtrangers and fo- " reigners, but fellow-citizens with the ſaints, and " are built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and " prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief cor- " ner ſtone**". We believe, " that eternal life is " the free gift of God, through Jeſus Chriſt our " lord††."

But, brethren, if our privileges are great, we know alſo that we muſt attend to our conduct, and " that " the

* Eph. i. 10, &c.
† Eph. iv. 6.
‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5.
§ 1 Cor. xv. 24.
‖ Gal. iii. 26.
¶ Rom. viii. 16, 17.
** Eph. ii. 19, 20.
†† Rom. vi. 23.

" the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but " righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the holy " ghoſt *; that we are not to live unto ourſelves, but " unto Chriſt †; and though it doth not appear, what " we ſhall be, we are certain, that when Chriſt ſhall " appear, we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as " he is ‡."

Thus, brethren, I have, with the utmoſt plainneſs, ſpoken to you on ſubjects of the greateſt importance to a rational creature. The bible is the rock on which I ſtand, and I exhort you to ſtudy it with attention, caſting off the yoke that narrow-minded prieſts and miniſters would impoſe upon you. And I cannot conclude this addreſs to you, without repeating my chief poſitions; that God is one, and that the whole doctrine of the trinity is a libel on the ſcriptures, and an inſult on the underſtanding of mankind.

* Rom. xiv. 17. † 2 Cor. v. 14. ‡ 1 John iii. 2.

W. FREND.

JESUS COLLEGE,
DEC. 25, 1788.

THE END.